

# THE SMART SET

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## THE MAY SMART SET

*The novelette which opens the May number is a delightfully humorous story told with the author's accustomed art. It is called,*

### **"Three of a Kind," By Baroness von Hutten**

*The short stories are of a remarkably high order of merit, from writers like Elliott Flower, Gustav Kobbé, Ellis Parker Butler, Herbert D. Ward and Mary Heaton Vorse.*

*AGNES REPPLIER will contribute an essay, entitled "**The Estranging Sea,**" and poems by Grace Duffield Goodwin, Aloysius Coll, Gelett Burgess, Samuel Minturn Peck, Charlotte Becker, and others, will complete the number.*

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# THE PINK TYPHOON

By Harrison Robertson

IT was not long past midnight when Judge Robert Macollister, lounging in one of the comfortable leather chairs in his library, lighted a cigar, crossed his feet on the edge of the table, and began to study the ceiling. He smoked about a third of the cigar, lowering his eyes once or twice to brush the ashes into the hair of the Circe on the bronze tray at his elbow. Then the cigar died out, and Judge Macollister did not stir until after the clock had struck one. For several minutes before that a close observer might have detected a changing expression on the judge's smoothly shaven face. A few minutes after that he took the cigar from his mouth, his lips wavered in an uncertain smile, and his eyes widened and rounded with partly surprised, partly unwilling, partly welcoming comprehension.

"Macollister," he said slowly, in a voice hardly more than audible, "you are a loon."

This Macollister, whom he might have discovered among the dragons and butterflies on the ceiling, was the Macollister who occasionally shared his moments of solitude. He had a habit, sometimes, of detaching himself from himself and sitting in judgment upon the detachment as upon another person. And in pronouncing judgment he was apt to address that person in accordance with the character of the finding. When this was neither very good nor very bad, or when it was dubious, the address was likely to be "Macollister." When the judge's condemnation was severe or his counsel strenuous, it was usually directed to "Robert

Macollister." When there was cause for felicitation or jubilation he voiced it to "Bobs." Tonight it was to "Macollister" that the judge imparted the conclusion of nearly an hour's rumination. And just how definite in his own mind was the judge's classification of Macollister as a loon, could not have been deduced with any degree of confidence from either his tone or his countenance as he spoke the words. It is altogether probable that an acute auditor and witness reasonably might have inferred that in stigmatizing Macollister as a loon the judge did so with waning regret and reproach, yet with waxing gratification and encouragement. It is more than probable that such an auditor and witness would have felt fully assured that in this instance the judge, whatever his conception of the thing, was at least subconscious that while there may be many things better than a loon, there are certainly as many that are worse; just as one as intimate with the judge as perhaps only the judge himself was would have felt assured, even though never having heard the word before, that it signified neither one extreme nor the other—that it indicated neither an all-black sheep nor a snow-white—since it was applied by the judge only to Macollister, instead of to Robert Macollister or to Bobs.

It would, indeed, be impossible to say with precision what Judge Macollister did mean when he called Macollister a loon, unless he himself could and would depict in adequate words his mental and emotional phenomena when, after that hour's period of travail, of trance, or whatever it was through which

he passed while he sat with his feet on the table and his eyes on the ceiling, he reached—whether gradually or suddenly, at all events finally—the realization that Macollister—Macollister, of all men—had about decided to buy an automobile!

That was the psychological moment when Judge Macollister, with enlarging eyes and a weak smile, broke the silence and, a little incredulously, a little awesomely, a little derisively, a little admiringly, and a little recklessly, pronounced Macollister a loon.

It would conduce to a better understanding of the judge at this critical moment of his life, and to a better understanding of the purport of the language to which he gave vent, to take a glimpse at the personality and environment of the man.

He was classed as one of "the best citizens" of his town of more than two hundred thousand citizens. Quiet and reserved, he had nevertheless made his way to general recognition as a leader of the local bar, and when scarcely turned forty had found himself a judge of the Court of Common Pleas. He filled this dignified office with dignity. It was no effort for him to do that, for, as his friend Jack Ormsby said, dignity was his long suit. Indeed, it was agreed among his friends that it was his too long suit. "It is well enough to be dignified, reasonably dignified," Jack Ormsby complained, "but when a man proposes to hold office by virtue of the most votes, there is such a thing as being too dignified. People who vote don't always know the difference between dignity and coldness, and even stuck-up-ness."

Retiring, as well as dignified, it is doubtful if Macollister would ever have become judge of the Court of Common Pleas if he had not first been appointed by the Governor to a vacancy on the bench, resulting from the death of a judge who in slipping on the ice one morning exploded in some way a cartridge in his hip-pocket. Thus given an opportunity to show his quality, the Governor's appointee had filled out the unexpired term of his deceased predecessor with such ability that in the next

political campaign his party, when in making up its ticket it found that it could use as ballast a little ability and dignity, placed his name on the slate, and he was duly elected for a full term, along with the other "standard bearers."

Now serving out the latter half of that term, he was, though nearer fifty than forty, unmarried. He was known as "still a young man," and there was nothing in his face or figure to indicate that he was not ten years younger than he was, yet he was also known as "a confirmed old bachelor," as he had been known ever since his early thirties, if not his late twenties.

To what extent this reputation was attributable to his attitude toward women, was a question even among his intimates. That those who were not his intimates, constituting the society of a city in which everybody knew everybody, should discover or invent for him an attitude toward women, or perhaps more than one such attitude, explanatory of his celibacy, and should support these discoveries or inventions with various rumors and traditions of unhappily romantic biography, was of course inevitable. The one grain of fact in all such gossip was that, as was generally known, when about twenty-five he had been engaged to a young girl who threw him over for a man Jack Ormsby had described as "a winning combination of three-score and ten—three-score years and ten million dollars." That this affair had its own influence in keeping him single, his best friend, Jack Ormsby, was satisfied; for, as Mrs. Jack Ormsby could testify, Jack had confided to her that only the other day Jack had pitched into Bobs Macollister for his failure to marry, and these were the very words of Bobs' reply: "Marriage is all well enough for two people who are in love with each other, but the time for that sort of a marriage for me has passed. Youth loves youth. When a man gets to my age women marry him because he is rich, or because he has done something, or because they just want to get married. None of that for me."



This man, who had spent all his life in the same town, who had lived since his birth in the same house, had never been known to depart from a conventional and orthodox usage of his time and place in any more conspicuous manner than to remain a bachelor, among a people who thought he should do otherwise, long after every associate of his own generation had become the founder of a family. His fellow citizen did not live who had any reason for suspecting him of any sportive tendency. In the matter of overcoming space a pair of deliberate legs, with a measured cadence of step, augmented when emergency suggested by a lumbering street-car or a leisurely brougham, served all his requirements. Even during that period of his life and times when every one of his kind, of all ages, sexes, colors and conditions, seemed to have taken to the bicycle, he had stood and walked his ground, upright in the sight of his Creator, never once bending his knee to the pigmy saddle or crooking his foot to the lowly pedal. No one who knew him, or his reputation, would criticize as exaggerated the assertion that if all the thousands of the city's population had been sifted down to the ten who would have been last thought of as possible automobilists, Judge Robert Macollister would have been among the tail-enders of that ten. Nothing was more consistent than Robert Macollister on the wool-sack; nothing more inconceivable than Robert Macollister in leather cap and goggles.

Moreover, it was at that period of the motor car's evolution in America when to drive through the streets in one was to create more of a commotion than Horne Tooke ever hoped to create by plastering his white horse with black wafers, and when to stop for two minutes in one was to collect as motley a crowd as that which follows the bear that dances the can-can, or as that which stands before the druggist's window displaying the lady of the abundant bottle-cultured hair. As yet there were hardly more than half a dozen automobiles in all the city of Robert Macollister, and he was a ven-

turesome pioneer who dared to own one of them.

All these facts and conditions must have had some bearing, direct or indirect, upon Macollister the judge when he finally realized that Macollister the loon had made up his mind to become one of those pioneers.

The clock had struck another hour before he left his chair in the library and began absently making his preparations for bed. But when the lights were out and his head on pillow, sleep was far from coming with its usual promptness, as was evidenced until well on toward morning by his turning from one side to the other and by an occasional smothered chuckle.

When he did sleep it was to awaken an hour beyond his accustomed time, and in an oblivion of the previous night's meditations and determinations that, for the moment, was complete. And when suddenly this film of oblivion broke and these meditations and determinations of the night were projected abruptly before him in all the first cold light of day his instantaneous sensation was a sinking recoil of amazement and repulsion.

"Is it possible, possible, possible, Robert Macollister," he snarled in contemptuous disgust, "that you ever dreamed of such a thing?"

But this revulsion wore away after he rose and began to take part in the activities of the day whose awakening light had so smitten him, and by the time he set forth on his walk downtown, in the bracing morning, with the first green touches of Spring on the lawns and the budding trees, his visions of the library lamp were rapidly becoming less inconsistent with the realities of sunlight; and when at last an automobile sped by him and he turned to watch its steady, businesslike flight, the judge once more passed sentence, but this time neither upon Macollister nor Robert Macollister.

"So you are going to get one of those things?" he said. "Go it, Bobs!"

And seeing, from a quick glance around him, that no one was near enough to have heard him, he went on

his way, with a jauntier swing, with the cast of resolve on his face, and the kindling beams of anticipation in his eyes.

## II

HAVING decided to do a thing, it was not the habit of Judge Macollister to lose much time in doing it. A few days after his travail in the library he could tell personal experiences of an effort to buy a motor-car.

He told some of them to Jack Ormsby and Preston Clay in a corner of the club. Preston Clay had heard a rumor that Bobs Macollister was thinking of getting an automobile, and Jack Ormsby had emphatically denied it. He had denied it several times within the past twenty-four hours: first, as repeated to him by Mrs. Jack Ormsby, and later as broached to him in various forms by his night-watchman, by the Rev. Dr. Winterburn, by Grit Riker, the great featherweight, by the "society editress" of one of the newspapers, and by the bootblack and several of the fellows at the club. Macollister himself had appeared just after Jack Ormsby had convinced Preston Clay of the preposterousness of this rumor, and, to Jack's utter undoing, had ranged himself on the side of Mrs. Jack, Grit Riker and the other rumorers.

After Jack Ormsby had, as he expressed it, recovered consciousness, and after his subsequent fit of laughter had begun to subside, with the acknowledgment that the refreshments were on him, he demanded of Bobs if he had actually bought his machine.

"Not yet," was the reply. "The dealers are one too many for me. There are two of them here, and I made the mistake of not closing a trade with one before I went to see the other. I got into Forgan's place first, and it would have been pretty easy for him to make a sale if Stuart had not called me up by telephone before I started out and had me promise to look at his car before buying. So I told Forgan I would think it over, and went around to Stuart's, not because I had any idea of taking his machine, but because a promise is a promise. In fact, I was

sure that I shouldn't take his machine, for before I had left Forgan he had proved to me beyond any sort of doubt that Stuart's machine wasn't worth the trouble of breaking up for scrap iron. But I hadn't been with Stuart half an hour before he had demonstrated that it wasn't at all necessary to break up Forgan's machine in order to convert it into scrap iron. That, I believe, is what the dealers call a 'demonstration.' A demonstrates B's car to be worthless, and B demonstrates A's car to be no better. If I bought from either Forgan or Stuart now it would be with the knowledge, acquired from expert authority, that I was buying junk.

"For instance—you see I have learned more about motor-cars in a day, thanks to Forgan and Stuart, than I ever learned about law in a month—there's Stuart's differential. Now, if you are going to have a differential in an automobile you ought to have a good one. Forgan showed me one of Stuart's differentials. I thought it looked very much like the insides of a coffee-grinder, but Forgan assured me it was not that bad, though he did explain very clearly how it was bound to strip the countershaft pinions and explode the rear tires the first time an attempt was made to steer a right-hand turn of a left-hand corner.

"But Forgan's carbureter is just as bad as Stuart's differential. Stuart had one, and I guessed it to be a patent mouse-trap. But you know I had never seen a carbureter before. Stuart had, though. I don't suppose there's anything in the carbureter line that Stuart has not seen, and if there is any man who knows more about carbureters than he, I shouldn't like to meet him, at least before court adjourns for the Summer vacation. You can't get much pleasure from motoring, you know, if you must stop your car every few minutes and take your carbureter to pieces in order to make sure that everything is just so. There are too many other things about an automobile besides the carbureter, I'm told, that also need looking after.

"One of them seems to be the clutch system—I believe that is what Forgan called it. You've got to have a clutch system, whether you like the idea or not. And you surely won't like it unless it clutches decently. Forgan didn't have any samples of Stuart's clutchers, but he had a lead pencil and plenty of paper, and before he got through I felt that it was decidedly safer to look at Forgan's drawings of Stuart's clutchers than to poke about among the vicious things themselves. You can't blame people and horses for feeling nervous, even in broad daylight, when they meet a clutcher like Stuart's car in the road.

"But Forgan's transmission system is no better. A transmission system is indispensable if you want your car to go, though Stuart says that some of them are only good to sell the cars that have some other kind. He hunted up a catalogue and showed me a picture of Forgan's transmission, and it was about as pleasant to look at as a school of squirming devil-fishes.

"It is the lock-nuts in Forgan's transmission that do the mischief. If one of the lock-nuts should become unlocked, what would there be to prevent the constellations of Forgan's planetary system crashing into each other? And when constellations crash into each other something is likely to happen not at all essential to automobilizing for pleasure. It is Stuart's opinion that in such a contingency the driver of Forgan's car wouldn't know whether he had telescoped into the Greek candy merchant on the curb or the surrey of women and children on the other side of the street, until the policeman had jerked him up and demanded his name and the plaintiffs were well on with the work of taking down a complete list of their witnesses.

"I might go on and tell you about some of the other defects of Stuart's and Forgan's cars, but I should probably have to go into technicalities to do that. Besides, I think I have told you enough already to explain why I haven't been able to make a choice between Stuart's and Forgan's cars."

"Looks as if you'll have to compromise on a pair of roller-skates, Bobs," Jack Ormsby suggested.

"Why not order a machine of some other make, directly from the factory?" asked Preston Clay.

"And have to take it either to Forgan or Stuart when it needed repairs? What sort of stuff do you think I am made of? Do you suppose I care to lay up opportunities, or necessities, to appeal to those men for help after having spurned their wise counsels; to face them as they peered into the insides of my miserable machine and looked their commiseration and contempt at its owner—that I could ride through the public streets when I knew, and no doubt the whole town knew, because Forgan and Stuart knew, how sadly I was in need of a guardian, or an alienist, to look after me? No; every one tells me not to buy a machine that has no agent here and that impresses me as good advice."

"Then it is Stuart, or Forgan, or nothing?" said Jack Ormsby.

"It is Stuart, or Forgan."

"An incurable case!" Jack Ormsby threw up his hands and winked at Clay. "It's bound to run its course."

"It is Stuart, or Forgan," Macollister repeated. "But which? That is what stumps me. I have gone over and over Forgan's explanation of Stuart's car and Stuart's explanation of Forgan's car, balancing the items in parallel columns, and, as well as I can make it, the balance is perfect. According to the showing, one is no worse than the other and both are as bad as they can be, except possibly in a single respect. That is the paint. The paint seems to be all right. At least, I presume I am warranted in inferring it to be so from the fact that not a word was said by either Forgan or Stuart against the other's paint. It may have been an oversight on their part, but if so that is not for me to regret. Reduced to the necessity of buying from one of them, it is something to be able to feel that at least I may be getting good paint for my money. So it is a choice now between Forgan's paint, which is red, and Stuart's paint, which is blue; and I shall make the

choice before I see Forgan or Stuart again, thus forestalling all possibility of their taking up that branch of the subject and convincing me that a man who would put his trust in a blue automobile is a fit subject for suicide, while he who would risk a red one would commit assassination. Now, gentlemen of the jury, which shall it be—red or blue?"

"Red! Red! Nothing but red!" Clay voted.

"Don't you do it, Bobs!" Jack Ormsby protested. "Blue, every time!"

"Oh, he's not buying a bunch of violets!" Clay explained.

"And he's not buying a prairie afire!" Jack explained.

"There you are!" Macollister sighed. "I might as well have left the question to Stuart and Forgan. I say, Jack, I wish you would ask Mrs. Jack to decide the thing for me. She has all sorts of good taste and good sense, and I have sought advice of all the rest of my friends already as to what machine I ought to get, but, as with you two, I might have left it to Stuart and Forgan."

"That's a good suggestion," Jack agreed. "I'll ask her tonight."

"I'm perfectly willing to leave it to her," Clay conceded.

"And, Jack," Macollister added, "you wouldn't mind calling her up by telephone now, would you, instead of waiting till you go home? If I could settle this thing somehow, I might get a good night's sleep once more."

Jack went into the telephone-booth and held five seconds' conversation with Mrs. Jack.

And that is how Judge Macollister made up his mind to buy Forgan's red automobile.

### III

HAVING become the owner of a motor-car, Macollister next devoted his spare time by day and his dreams by night to the work of learning to run it. This Forgan was to teach him, and for the first lesson Forgan chose a beautiful afternoon and the principal parkway. Everybody Macollister knew seemed to be out taking the air, and he felt far less comfortable in his new seat behind the

wheel than in his old one on the bench or at the club.

It was some relief to him that all his attention was required by the car: he could very well refuse to see those who passed him, though he was keenly conscious that they saw him, and usually when he was doing something wrong and Forgan was conspicuously exerting himself trying to instruct him how to do it right.

At the end of this lesson he ventured to suggest that the next one be taken at night.

"Why?" Forgan asked.

"Because the people will be off the streets then, and it will be quieter and—and more roomy."

"And darker and harder to see what you are doing. Don't you expect to use your car except when the people are off the streets?"

He could not argue the point with Forgan. He felt that in the presence of this man—this man so impressively master of the mysteries of the automobile—he was in the presence of a superior, and he was instinctively as deferential to him as one of his own court officers was to Judge Macollister.

And when Forgan finished his instructions and turned him loose, alone in the world, as Macollister with some levity, though with something that was not altogether levity, expressed it, he was affected with a sobering, if not awing, realization of every man's responsibility to make his own way. He was impressed with it more soberingly, perhaps, than he had been since those youthful days when he had left the law school to hang out his sign as a practicing attorney, with no capital but his health and education.

As Forgan, his work done, went about his business, leaving Macollister, when next he chose to go forth with his car, to go forth alone, he left him for a time under the shadow of a sometimes recurring cognition that man, in the great things, the real things, of life, however interrelated he may be with society and however surrounded by associates and friends, must stand alone, upon his own resources; must



hoe his own row, must paddle his own canoe, and certainly when, as in this instance, unprovided with a chauffeur, must run his own automobile.

He did not take his first ride alone until several days after Forgan had pronounced him competent to take it. He was too busy, or it was too wet, or too cold, or too dusty. And when he did take it, being no longer under the domination of Forgan, he chose his own time. He did not choose the deserted streets of night, but rather the deserted streets of dawn. Rising with the first light of day, he went swiftly and sternly around to his carriage-house and threw open the doors. There stood his red car, in all its bold beauty and tremendous power, and he, a mere delfer in dusty law books, a novice who had never touched an automobile ten days before, was here to take it forth among the haunts of men. He looked at it, this marvelous thing of the might of many horses, this wizard harnessing of the wonderful combustion engine, through shafts, levers, gears and wheels within wheels, to a practical road wagon, as strong as an ox-cart, as comfortable as a palace car and as swift as a lightning express; and as he realized that the moment had come when he was to assert his mastery of it, he experienced a fleeting sensation, happily lasting but a second or two, that he would not care for breakfast that morning. An early coal peddler drove by, lounging on the edge of his cart, his reins hanging loosely on the back of his sleepy mule, and Macollister, looking after him, muttered:

"I wonder if he would exchange motors with me? Blessed is the man who keeps within his own limitations."

Then he pulled himself together and set himself to the experiment of starting his engine.

Carefully recalling just how Forgan had done it, he turned on the gasoline, opened the throttle, primed the carbureter, switched on the electric current, and then revolved the starting crank, once, twice, three times, four—"pang!" the hoped-for

explosion had come, and with his blood tingling to the music Macollister stood back for a little and listened to his engine as it ran with the force, rhythm and regularity of a cataract.

Then he mounted to the seat, pressed the reverse pedal, and delighted himself by backing out of the house as well as Forgan himself could have done it.

Cautiously throwing in the clutch on the low gear, he felt his way for a few yards, when he shifted to the second, and the car, picking up its speed, glided forward smoothly, sensitively responsive to his every movement of steering-wheel or throttle. In his elation at the complete success of the beginning of his first venture as sole engineer of the machine, Macollister sailed away oblivious of the fact that he had left the carriage-house doors wide open and that his overcoat, which should have been on his back, was hanging on one of them.

It was an exhilarating spin of twenty miles that he took that morning. The car behaved beautifully, running freely and steadily, without a hitch or a falter of any kind, and so greatly did Macollister's confidence rise with his exhilaration that he, who had slipped forth early to avoid crowded streets, dashed back careless how crowded the streets were; that he, who with tense attitude and fixed eyes, had steered from his own square as if picking his way through egg-shells, or bomb-shells, swung back into that square with easy seat and a triumphant horn, whose thrilling blasts wildly excited the small folks and dogs of the neighborhood.

And that afternoon Macollister, who had hesitated from day to day to take his first trip in his car, summarily cut short a vapid wrangle between two opposing attorneys and adjourned court in time to take a second spin of twenty miles.

Thus began the new life for Macollister—as a "pioneer," members of the Automobile Club called him; as a "crank," "sport," "red-devil," "shaffer," various others designated him. Having proved to his satisfaction his

ability to control the machine, he was ever ready to share his car with a companion, and many were his fellow-citizens who had with him their first ride in an automobile. Most of them began it, with however bold a front, with unmistakable qualms and ill-concealed trepidation; some declined his invitation with transparently lame excuses; a few honestly admitted that they wouldn't feel safe in "one of them things;" and two or three plainly intimated that they did not believe it was given to every man to be both a good judge and a good automobile driver.

But in two weeks he was beginning to feel that he could afford to smile at any doubts of his ability as an automobile driver, and in three weeks he felt this so strongly that, on Jack Ormsby complimenting him on his control of the machine, he inquired if Jack thought he had reached the point where it would be safe to take Mrs. Jack out. He had intended from the first that Mrs. Jack should be the first lady to ride in his red car.

Jack had no misgivings as to that; so the next afternoon Macollister drew up, in impressive style, in front of the handsome Ormsby residence on Fourth avenue.

It was a fashionable square, and by the time pretty Mrs. Jack had come out and exclaimed on the various features of the car's beauty, had asked the purpose of this and that, had been informed which was her seat and had been helped into it, had petitioned to be allowed to blow the horn, had tried, failed, and been shown how easily it could be done by one who understood such mysteries—by this time the windows and doors of the houses on either side of the street had begun to show signs of life, children were emerging from unknown recesses, and the sidewalks, which had been deserted when Macollister drove up, had here and there dots of spectators, standing singly or in small clusters.

Macollister, reflecting that until the automobile became less a novelty the man who owned one must expect such manifestations of curiosity, yet congratulating himself that the man who

owned one possessed the means for quickly getting beyond the range of the curious, now made summary preparations for departure. He performed the usual preliminaries for starting the engine; then vigorously turned the crank four revolutions. There was no explosion. Four more revolutions. No explosion. The preliminaries again, after which four, then eight revolutions of the crank. Still no explosion.

"Something is wrong," he said weakly, amidst Mrs. Jack's expressions of wonder and sympathy.

He pondered in clouded perplexity for a moment; then the cloud lifted a little. He immediately switched to the other battery, and again turned the starting crank. No explosion.

He pondered again, and then announced, "It must be a broken wire."

Whereupon he fumbled around in various parts of the machinery, examining all the wires he could find.

"The wiring seems to be all right," he said, standing upright once more, and using his handkerchief.

Then he went to work at the crank again, but without getting an explosion.

He pondered again, fanning himself with his cap.

Next he got out a wrench, and going down into the vitals of the machine, removed a spark plug. This he cleaned with gasoline, after which he replaced it in the cylinder.

"I think it will go now," he proclaimed, returning to the starting crank.

No explosion.

He stood up and wiped his brow with the waste with which he had cleaned the spark plug; and somebody among the spectators, who had increased in numbers and drawn up closer, snickered.

He went back to the spark plug, again took it out, and screwed in a fresh one; but his wearisome exercise at the starting crank was, as before, without result.

He stood upright again and rested, while considering what to do next. By this time it was no little relief to stand upright and rest, even for a few seconds. But his temperature did

not fall as he considered what to do next. What *was* he to do next?

"You got a short circuit," said someone in the crowd of onlookers. "I seen a machine actin' just like yours the other day and they found it had a short circuit."

Short circuit? Where was a "short circuit" to be looked for, and what was it like when found? Forgan had never explained to him anything about short circuits; Forgan had never intimated that short circuits were among the troubles which might beset even a Stuart automobile.

"Oh, it can't be a short circuit," he said confidently, dismissing with dignified condescension the suggestion of the ignorant outsider; "I have already looked into that thoroughly."

Once more he picked up the wrench and removed the spark plug. Connecting it again with its wire, he laid it on the cylinder head and turned the starting crank. A "fat," buzzing spark proved that there was no short circuit, and that the ignition apparatus was working properly.

"I told you there was no short circuit," he vouchsafed, replacing the spark plug in the cylinder. But when he took up his labors at the starting crank once more it was again in vain.

As he paused for a brief respite Mrs. Jack, who was now on the verge of tears, and who had manifested her solicitude by countless exclamations, invocations and interrogations, had to be answered again that there was nothing she could do, although he felt that it would help some if he had the courage to request that she bring him a few of Jack's handkerchiefs. His own was now beyond satisfactory use.

But what else could he do to get his engine going? He bethought him of another thing that Forgan had shown him, and, opening the pet-cock of the cylinder, "cranked" out the surplus oil; but when he closed the cock and bent again over the starting crank there was no explosive reward.

Then he selected from his tools a screw-driver and investigated the carbureter. There was plenty of gasoline

in the chamber, and, so far as he understood Forgan's elucidations, there was nothing awry in the mechanism. He reassembled the carbureter and returned to the starting crank; but there was no different result. He could not get the least hint of an explosion.

He leaned against the car and tried to think of something that he had not yet done. He was fatigued in body and depressed in spirit, and he afterward confessed to Jack Ormsby that if at that particular moment the chance had been offered him to exchange his title to the automobile and his place in the centre of that staring crowd for a tub of water and a cake of soap in some far, secluded bath-room, he would have made the exchange gladly.

"Friend," called out one of the spectators—a man wearing a corduroy cap and smoking an assertive pipe, coming nearer and inspecting the car critically—"friend, I can tell you what's the matter with it. It's got too cold, from the chilly weather."

Macollister made no reply. With his hair plastered to his perspiring forehead, his collar wilted, and his cuffs clinging limply to his wet wrists, he did not care to discuss the weather with a person who thought that anything could get too cold on a day like that.

"I guess, friend," resumed the man with the pipe, "she's been standin' out here coolin' off for some time, ain't she?"

It was more of an assertion than a question, and Macollister did not exert himself to reply. He was not disposed to further exertion of any sort just then.

"You bet she has!" a boy on the curbing replied for him. "He's been out here tryin' to git her started up mighty nigh ever since school let out."

"I knowed it," said the man with the pipe. "I got some knowledge of them things. My cousin in Chicago owns one; and me and him's run her many a time, and I've seen her act just like this one, all on account of a cold mixer. You see, friend, it's this way. When the mixer gets too cold the gasoline



won't mix, and when it won't mix the engine can't get no gas, and when it can't get no gas a gas engine can't run. What you want to do now is to warm up your mixer, with hot towels, or hot bricks, or a hot waterbag, or somethin' of that kind that won't set your gaso-line on fire."

"Why not a hot poultice?" asked Macollister, making a desperate effort to smile. After which two or three minutes were taken up by the proffers of suggestions and advice from various others of the assemblage.

"Hi, there!" demanded a policeman, shoving through the mob. "What you blockin' up the street this way for? Move on with that thing, there!"

Macollister attempted another smile. "I'll be delighted to move on, Mr. Ahern," he answered, "if you'll only show me how."

"Holy murder!" gasped Mr. Ahern, "w'y, if 'tain't Jidge Macollister! I beg your pardon, jidge; I didn't know you! Are you hurt bad?"

"Here it is!" panted Mrs. Jack triumphantly, as she ran from the house. "I thought I had one! Now do put it on right away!"

She carried a filled hot waterbag, and Mr. Ahern, taking it a little nervously, turned to Macollister.

"It's jist the thing, mum," said Mr. Ahern to Mrs. Jack. "Now, jidge, I'll put it on ye, wheriver the place is, and thin I'll ring for the ambylance."

"Oh, it isn't for him; it's for it!" explained Mrs. Jack.

"Yes, for it," added Macollister, pointing to the car. "I'm not hurt at all, thank you, Mr. Ahern."

He laughed, and the crowd laughed, and Mr. Ahern became stern and flourished his billy, with the threat that if the street was not cleared at once he would ring for the patrol-wagon instead of the ambulance.

The man with the pipe relieved Mr. Ahern of the hot waterbag, and pressed it around the carbureter, Mrs. Jack anxiously intent upon the operation, standing by his side. He held the bag there for two or three minutes, the

crowd, including Mr. Ahern, looking on in silent curiosity. Macollister watched the performance rather languidly. He had reached a point at which he neither hoped for the success nor feared for the failure of the new treatment. But when the man with the pipe removed the bag from the carbureter, which he pronounced "good and warm," and seized the starting crank, some life returned to Macollister's face. It gave the situation a new aspect to stand off and see another at work with the starting crank.

The man with the pipe worked vigorously and perseveringly, and was relieved by Mr. Ahern, with reddening face and shortening breath. But all to no avail. The hot water treatment was no more effective than any of the other treatments had been, and the man with the pipe acknowledged defeat and guessed that the machine was a different sort from his cousin's in Chicago.

Then Macollister, declaring that it was useless to bother with the thing further, and that he would send for Forgan, went into the house, to the telephone, while Mrs. Jack, accompanying him as far as the porch, took up her vigils there, aided by Mr. Ahern, who remained guard over the car and called to her that he would see that it didn't run away.

Macollister, finishing with the telephone, found opportunity to use some of Jack Ormsby's soap and water and to appropriate some of his friend's linen. By the time he rejoined Mrs. Jack on the porch he felt equal to a civil remark. He even felt equal to a smile that was almost natural.

"I rather think my car is a misogynist," was his remark.

"I could see all along," answered Mrs. Jack, "that you were just dying to call the poor thing bad names."

"Because," he explained, "I have had it three weeks now and have taken dozens of men out in it without its once giving the least trouble, but the first time a lady takes a seat in it you see it refuses to budge an inch."

There was a great clatter down the

street, and the crowd which lingered with Mr. Ahern made way as Forgan dashed up in another red car. Mrs. Jack gave a little cry of joy and hurried out with Macollister to meet Forgan.

"What's the trouble?" cheerfully inquired Forgan, with a twinkle in his eye.

"Don't know," Macollister confessed. "Won't start. Worked with it about an hour."

"Let's see."

Forgan went to the stubborn car, performed the little preliminaries to starting it, looking quizzically at Macollister after each one of them, turned the crank, and almost immediately the engine began running.

A feeble smile crept into Macollister's face. For the moment he was possessed by a profound longing for a coat collar so wide that he could turn it up completely over his head.

He helped the rejoicing Mrs. Jack into his car again, and then walked away several yards with Forgan, for a few words in private.

"Well?" Forgan's cheerful voice and twinkling eyes inquired.

"Get you a new Spring hat and send me the bill."

"So sometimes you don't start an engine as I do?"

"As I watched you I remembered, all at once, that I had neglected to do one of the things that you did."

"And that?"

"To open the throttle. I worked with the thing an hour without once thinking to open the throttle."

He credited Forgan with consideration for not laughing louder.

"Oh, well," Forgan smiled, stepping into his own car, "little things like that will happen. Some throttles never close completely, but yours isn't set that way. Forgetting to open a throttle is a little thing; but after you have had more experience you won't forget that a gasoline engine can't run without something to run on, and that it can't get anything to run on through a closed throttle."

#### IV

THAT was one of the class of troubles

which, he came to understand in time, most commonly befall the man with his first automobile—the troubles for which the man, and not the machine, is to be blamed.

It was to one of these that, not long after his drive with Mrs. Jack Ormsby, he owed the beginning of his acquaintance with Marion and Donald Hurd.

Among the results of his acquisition of an automobile was the rapid extension of his familiarity with the region in which he lived. With this swift and enticing means of locomotion at his disposal, he found himself penetrating quarters of the city and traversing roads in the contiguous country to which he had before been a stranger. One of his most inviting outlets from town was through Cherokee Park and out the old thoroughfare beyond the park, from which he could reach several of the best turnpikes and dirt roads of the country. Making this exit one afternoon, he noticed, shortly after he had left behind the picturesque beauty and Springtime fragrance of the park, steam hissing from the escape of his radiator. That was something new in his brief experience as an automobilist, and stopping the car, he got out to investigate.

The water was boiling violently and the whole front half of the car seemed to be emitting waves of heat. Unscrewing the cap of the radiator, he found that there was very little water left, and his conscience pricked him for his neglect of an essential duty. He had not refilled the radiator for weeks, and he recalled now that Forgan had warned him against letting the water get too low, on penalty of being "hung up," with possibly a damaged, if not ruined, engine. Clearly the one precaution to take now was to secure more water, and he looked around for a source of supply. He had stopped in front of the old Hurd place, whose colonial columns and red brick gables were visible some two hundred yards from the road, through a wide grove of great forest trees that were worth a trip from any city to see. Here collected that in this grove there had been, when as a

lad he had poached on these lands with his gun, a spring of cool, sweet water, from which he had drunk many a time, stretched on the ground, face down and heels up. The spring no doubt was still there, and he started in search of it, after taking a collapsible rubber pail from his tool-box.

As he opened the gate into the gravelled drive that wound up to the house he opened the gate to Love-at-first-sight. Under an immense beech, the sunlight flickering through its foliage upon their bare heads, stood two beautiful children, intently watching him, with an air that suggested that only the crackling of a twig might startle them, like young partridges, to scurry to cover in the long grass. One was a boy, of five or six; the other a girl, hardly more than a year older. Half concealed behind the trunk of the tree, she peered around at Macollister over the curls of the boy, who held her hand protectingly and stood forth a sturdy little figure, with courage resolutely, if not altogether confidently, screwed to the sticking point.

Macollister beamed on them with such a smile as must have reassured them if they had been in reality young partridges.

"How do you do?" he cried, waving the collapsible pail at them in a salutation of good fellowship.

"How do you do, sir?" answered the boy, with a corresponding, though less pronounced, wave of his hand.

"May I come in and get a bucket of water?"

"Yes, sir; you are very welcome, sir," the boy replied, his voice perceptibly gaining in confidence.

"And won't you show me the way to the spring?" walking toward them. "It has been such a long time since I was there."

"Yes, indeed, sir," the boy assured him.

"My name is Bobs," holding out his hand. "And what is yours?"

"My name is Donald Hurd," giving one hand to Macollister, while still clasping with his left hand the girl's right. "And her name is Marion

Hurd. She's my sister, and I'm her brother."

The readiness with which Marion withdrew her hand from Donald's and placed it, with grave silence, in that of Macollister, where she allowed it to remain, completed the pair's conquest of him.

"The spring is over this way, sir," said Donald, motioning toward the house.

Marion was mute, but with a slight pressure of the hand she reinforced Donald's words and guided Macollister toward the house.

Donald trudged ahead, leading the way. Before his short legs had carried him far he turned and eyed Macollister frankly, from foot to head.

"We're not afraid of you at all," he volunteered in a tone of semi-confidence.

"I should hope not!" Macollister exclaimed.

"Donald isn't afraid of anything," Marion for the first time broke her silence.

"But Ruck and Rowena," added Donald, walking backward and pointing to the automobile in the road, "they're terribly afraid of that!"

"What? Not the automobile?"

"Yes, sir—Ruck and Rowena are!"

"I'm not afraid of it now, but I was a little while ago," Marion confessed.

"Marion was terribly afraid of it a little while ago," Donald corroborated her. "Marion, you know, she's a girl."

"And Ruck and Rowena—are they girls, too?"

"No-o!" Donald cried. "Rowena is a cow, and Ruck, he's the man who drives her from the pasture."

"Ah, I see! So Ruck and Rowena are afraid of automobiles?"

"Yes, sir; they are terribly afraid of yours. Ruck says he was driving Rowena home last Sunday and your automobile came chou-chou down the road and Rowena lit out one way and Ruck lit out the other way, and Rowena, Ruck says, hasn't ever come home yet."

"But she has, though," Marion hastened to add; "she came home that very night."

"I know," Donald explained, "but

Ruck never puts that in when he tells about it. He says it wouldn't make a good story that way."

"I see; Ruck as a story-teller is a true artist. I shouldn't wonder if the cow that jumped over the moon was a chapter of Ruck's story of 'Rowena and the Motor Car.'"

"That's in 'Mother Goose!'" Donald scoffed.

"And so is the dish that ran away with the spoon," Marion mused.

"True; but it is not likely that Ruck would mind that. As an artistic story-teller, wouldn't Ruck, don't you think, feel at liberty to take his material wherever he found it?"

"Sir?" was all that Donald ventured; while Marion merely stooped to pluck a dandelion.

"And as to the dish that ran away with the spoon, I don't know what is your honest opinion about that incident, but I am perfectly satisfied that Ruck very plausibly could lay the responsibility for that runaway on an automobile, and if necessary could prove it by having the spoon go into any court in the country with a damage suit."

"Sir?" repeated Donald.

"I beg your pardon. 'Drink deep or touch not the Pierian spring,' is a wise admonition; and here I am talking as if I were in the habit of drinking the spring dry without taking breath, when the object of my mission is merely a bucket of water to cool a motor's thirst."

"Ruck says buttermilk is a heap cooler than water for the thirst," Donald announced.

"Would you like some?" hospitably asked Marion.

"No, no, with a thousand thanks. The automobile is yet in its infancy, and I hardly think it has reached that stage of its development where it may be allowed a buttermilk diet. Besides, think what a strain it would be on the generosity of Ruck and Rowena."

"When I'm a man," answered Donald, "I'm going to have a pipe like Ruck's."

"Then," Marion served notice firmly, "I hope Delicia will tie up your bref good."

Donald ignored this in his interest in the collapsible pail, which Macollister extended as they reached the spring and filled with water.

The children returned with him to the gate, and were then coaxed, without much insistence, to the car.

They watched him as he poured the water into the radiator and stowed the pail in the tool-box, Marion gravely and Donald with rising excitement that impelled his feet to many changes of position and his tongue to many curious questions.

Marion finally reached up and touched, then caressed, the soft leather of the seat.

"Oh, how nice!" she sighed.

"Wouldn't you like to sit up there?" Macollister suggested.

"Oh, may I?" she asked in subdued ecstasy.

Macollister lifted her up and placed her on the seat. She sat very still, her hands folded in her lap, her feet crossed, her face rapt in content.

Meanwhile, Donald was fascinated by the pneumatic tires. He poked them with his finger, prodded them with his toe, gripped them with his hands, pressed them with his cheek. He volleyed questions. Were the wheels hollow? What was inside? How did he blow them up? How often did he blow them up? Would they go "fiz-z-z" if you stuck a knife into them? Would they shoot off like a cannon? Ruck said they would.

"And I daresay Ruck could prove it by Rowena. At any rate, Donald, I shouldn't wonder if you were a born automobilist. Do you know, you seem to go directly and intuitively to what the experts and the experienced testify is the one weak point of the automobile of today?"

"Sir?"

"Please blow your horn," Marion at last interrupted her dream to petition.

"Yes, please blow your horn!" Donald echoed with delight.

Macollister complied; Marion beamed beatifically; and Donald danced with joy. "Please let me blow it, won't you?" he begged.

He tried, and failed. Macollister showed him the knack of it and, trying again, he succeeded, his own shout of exultation following the "honk" of the horn.

Then Marion tried to blow it, but failed; was instructed by Macollister and Donald, and still failed.

"She's a girl, you know," said Donald apologetically to Macollister, as man to man.

"Donald can do 'most anything," said Marion proudly.

"She's a trump, Donald Hurd," Macollister protested, "and you and I are duffers if we can't show her how to blow a horn as well as we can."

"We are dufferers if we can't show her how to blow a horn as well as we can!" Donald readily agreed.

They set to work, and with ultimate success, much to Marion's surprise and satisfaction.

Whereupon Donald saw his opportunity. But he was generous enough to qualify Marion's previously expressed tribute to his powers. "Me and you," he said to Macollister, "can do 'most anything!"

After Macollister, in response to Donald's eager questioning, had explained various other mysteries of the machine he proposed that his recent hosts become his guests and take a drive with him.

"Oh, will you let us?" Donald consented joyously. "Come on, Marion; he's going to take us automobile-riding!"

"We'd love to, oh, so much!" Marion addressed Macollister. "But we can't. We can't leave home today."

"I'm downright sorry," Macollister said in all sincerity. "Would your mother object? Couldn't you run to the house and ask her?"

"She isn't at home this afternoon," Marion explained; "and she said we must not leave the place while she was away."

"Then we must have our ride some other time. Give your mother this, Marion," handing the child his card, "and tell her I do hope she will allow

you and Donald to go with me for an hour or two the first time I am driving by again. And tell her I will be sure to take the very best of care of you."

"Yes, sir; indeed I will," answered Marion.

"I'll tell her, too!" Donald volunteered.

Macollister bade them good-bye and started his engine, Marion backing toward the gate and finding again Donald's hand, and Donald, listening and looking intently, grew very still, in the stillness of those who stand in the presence of great and awe-inspiring events.

Macollister stepped up into his seat, and with a wave of his hat and a blast of his horn, was off; while Donald, as one in a trance, acknowledged the salute with a stiff lifting of his hand, and Marion gracefully blew a kiss from her fingers.

"Bless their hearts!" sounded a man's voice amid the pulsations of the automobile, and in a tone which no one, including himself, would have recognized as characteristic of Robert Macollister.

## V

At dinner that evening, with the Ormsbys, he told of Marion and Donald: "They must be new-comers," he added. "There haven't been any Hurds at the old place for years, have there, Jack?"

"Not since old Donald Hurd left it to marry some girl in one of the Carolinas. That was nearly ten years ago, and, you know, he was never seen in this part of the world afterward."

"Why, they are Donald Hurd's own children!" was the information which Mrs. Jack Ormsby was delighted to be able to furnish. "I heard a week ago that his widow had taken possession of the old place. She's been abroad most of the time since her husband died, but she has come here to live now. And she's scandalously wealthy! The Brampton girls told me she has a ship-load of new French gowns, and a French chef, and a French maid for herself, and an English or Irish maid for the children,



and German housemaids, and an English butler and footmen, and a Yankee gardener. I'm dying to call on her!"

"That seems a pretty elaborate establishment," Jack commented, "for a young country girl who ten years ago, no doubt, had never been nearer Paris than some little Carolina village."

"Yes," resumed Mrs. Jack, "everybody says she was desperately poor when she married old Mr. Hurd. Lucette Brampton says she was so poor that they had to sell the family cow to piece out the trousseau."

"Well," Macollister grunted, "there is another family cow now, so I have heard. We might cancel some of our indebtedness to the Bramptons by confiding to them this item of information. Her name is Rowena. Her nationality I do not know. That is one of the things yet remaining for the Bramptons to find out."

"You remember Donald Hurd, don't you, Bobs?" Jack asked.

"As well as I remember my Shylock."

"He *was* an old skinflint. The boys at the club used to say he always let his name be posted for his dues until the last day of grace, in order to make the interest on the money. And he was at least sixty-five. I don't understand how any girl could have married him."

"Neither do I. But we see that sort of thing every day, don't we? In fact, is there anything that we see oftener? And a pity of it is that if the Old Masters were around today looking for models for holy-faced Madonnas, as often as not they would be glad to choose these very women who barter themselves for dowries. It's simply sickening."

"Now we've started Bobs on what was his Hobby Number One before he got his auto," laughed Jack.

"Well, I'm sure," bridled Mrs. Jack, "there are plenty of nice girls who would have married Mr. Hurd, and loved him, too. I've heard ever so many say he was handsome and courtly and gallant and tender-hearted and just idolized his wife, and I remember

him myself and he didn't look so very old and I'm sure he was very attractive, and the more you two abuse him and her the sooner do I intend to call on her!"

"Then she certainly won't mind in the least our abusing her," said Macollister, with his best smile.

Which was the end of the discussion and the beginning of an enforced second dish of strawberries for Macollister.

Walking out of the courthouse next day with a lawyer whom he remembered as an executor of the Hurd estate, Macollister took occasion to inquire who was living at the Hurd place now.

"Why, Donald Hurd's widow and children," was the reply. "They have only recently come, and expect to make their home here. A fine woman, judge, and will be a great addition to our society."

So part at least of Mrs. Jack's gossip was confirmed. Macollister felt a genuine regret. He liked the Hurd children, but certainly he did not like their parentage. He had meant to see them again, but he did not care, now that he knew who she was, to come in contact with the mother. If he could pick up the youngsters at the gate some time as he passed, well and good; but he did not propose to go through that gate again, not even for a rubber pail of water.

So strong were his prejudices that they dulled his interest in his new acquaintances, and it was more than a week before he drove out by the Hurd place again. But he saw nothing of Marion or Donald about the grounds, nor of any one else. It was not until he drove that way a few days later that he found the opportunity to pick up the young Hurds.

He was spied by Donald afar off, and by the time that the automobile drew up to the gate Donald, breathless, had scrambled to the top of the fence, where he was eagerly awaiting Macollister's arrival.

"She says we may go!" he shouted. "She says we may go whenever you ask us again!"

"Good!" smiled Macollister. "Well,

I have come to ask you again right now."

"She says it was very kind of you, and we must thank you our very nicest way."

"And I'm sure there couldn't be a nicer way. But where is Marion?"

"Yonder she is, in the swing. I don't reckon she knows you are here."

It was a rope swing, tied to a limb of one of the trees near the spring, and Marion, grasping the ropes on either side, her feet outstretched and her hair flying, was being pushed almost to the lower branches of the tree by a slender figure, bare-headed and white-aproned, standing on the ground.

"Who is that swinging her?" demanded Macollister.

"That's Delicia," Donald replied.

Delicia! Delicia, Macollister reasoned, must be the English or Irish maid that Mrs. Jack Ormsby had spoken of. Why did that class of people run to such absurd, silly names?

"Well, go tell Marion we are ready," he said to Donald.

His eyes followed Donald as he galloped away. Fifty yards before the boy reached the swing Macollister heard his own presence triumphantly heralded. He saw Delicia turn and look toward him, and then, stopping the swing, lift Marion out. Delicia and Marion, accompanied a few steps by Donald, hastened into the house, and Donald ran back and climbed into the seat beside Macollister.

"Marion will be ready in a minute," he explained. "Delicia took her inside to fix her hair and put on her hat. I don't have to fix my hair so much, I don't. I have my hair cut at the barber-shop, just like men; and the barber puts white stuff on my face, but Delicia washes it off."

After all, Macollister reflected, Delicia might not be as bad as her name.

Delicia soon appeared at the door with Marion and after a final tweak of her hat and twitch of her sash sent her forth.

"Run, Marion!" yelled Donald impatiently.

But Marion did not run. She came

on with a lightness that was airily graceful, yet with a poise and sedateness that bespoke both dignity and due consciousness of her graces.

"Marion is dressed up," said Donald confidentially to Macollister. "That's the way she always walks when she is dressed up."

Macollister had never got more pleasure out of his car than he got the next hour, with Marion and Donald sharing the seat with him. It ran like a thing of splendid life and power, exulting in the invigoration of the Spring day, and so sensitively responsive to the driver's will as to create in him a feeling of unison with this carnate force at his command. As he wished, it bounded or crept forward, skimmed over level stretches, veered around obstructions, leaped up the hills and frolicked down declines, always impressive of a reserve energy that made what it did appear but play, and of a throbbing vitality that made its play appear but the joy of its being. There was an exhilaration in it all that enabled Macollister readily to understand how some men have become nervous wrecks through over-indulgence in the intoxication of "motoring."

And today, added to this, was the delight of Donald and Marion. Donald was a bundle of springs, exclamations and interrogations. His curiosity was insatiable, his admiration and wonder were unstinted, his physical contortions and postures so many and so sudden that Macollister more than once had to restrain him with imperative voice or hand. Marion was very different. After the little catching of her breath with the first starting of the car she adjusted herself in the seat as if it belonged to her, and with hands folded in her lap, feet crossed, head high, and eyes composedly contemplating the thread of road far in front, or serenely observant of some motion of Macollister's, or complacently responsive to Donald's invocation of tongue and index finger, she sat throughout the drive rapt in the rarefied air that the humble pedestrian of song and story is so often wont to ascribe to ladies of high



degree who, unbending and unseeing, roll by in carriages. Macollister, from the corner of his eye, watched her with a smile that, had not the occasion been such as to discourage so unceremonious a departure from the proprieties due, might have been an admiring pat on the head or chuck under the chin.

"Donald," he ultimately remarked, "you may think you have reason to believe that in this geographical division of the world, in this particular period of time, a certain princess of the realm is taking the air for the first time in a motor car. But I know better, Donald. I can see if you cannot, that her usual means of locomotion has always been motor cars, driven, perhaps, by staid chauffeurs in wigs and ermine. In fact, Donald, it is perfectly plain to me that motor cars are as old a story with her ladyship as go-carts are with you or me."

"Sir?" replied Donald, looking up from an inspection of the coil on the dashboard.

"We have never heard the story about the princess and the motor car," Marion apologized for Donald. "Won't you tell it to us sometime—when we are not riding in the automobile?"

At the end of an hour Macollister set them down at their gate, after making an appointment with them for another drive at five o'clock sharp three afternoons later. Not Delicia, nor Delicia's mistress, nor any of the cosmopolitan household with which Mrs. Jack Ormsby had surrounded old Donald Hurd's widow was visible. The only living things to be seen about the place were the martins chattering around a cot over the barn, the swallows above the chimneys of the house against the limpid green sky of the coming twilight, and half a mile across the fields, standing on the top of a stone fence, a figure in shirt sleeves, frantically swinging a hat.

"Yonder is Ruck!" cried Donald. "He's waving his hat at us. Hi, Ruck!" standing up on the seat and returning Ruck's salute in kind. "We've been out riding in it! It didn't shoot off like a cannon at all!"

"How about Rowena, Donald?" Macollister inquired. "Can you see her, or any remaining trace of her, anywhere on the map?"

But Donald did not have opportunity to make a comprehensive survey of the landscape which was Ruck's setting, for Marion, shocked at Donald's profanation with his feet of the upholstery that had so appealed to her sense of luxury, promptly and reproachfully pulled him down.

## VI

FIVE o'clock sharp three afternoons later found Macollister and his car at the Hurd gate, where Marion and Donald, ready for the drive, were awaiting him.

Six o'clock sharp found the party at the gate again, the drive ended.

This schedule was punctually observed on four afternoons, and Macollister discovered that by observing it nothing was easier than to pick up the young Hurds for his little excursions into the country without coming in contact with any other members of the Hurd household. In fact, on none of these afternoons had any of the members been visible, except on that when Ruck had waved his salutation across the fields and when Delicia had accompanied Marion as far as the front veranda of the house.

This plan of making definite appointments with the children worked entirely to Macollister's satisfaction on the first four afternoons he tried it. It worked equally well at five o'clock of the fifth afternoon, but at six o'clock the schedule missed for the first time, and instead of leaving Marion and Donald at the gate, as previously, at that hour he was miles away, laboring with a punctured tire.

It was his first puncture, and he rather welcomed it, for he had thoroughly familiarized himself with the catalogue and manual of instructions issued by the makers of his tires and he did not regret an opportunity to put to practical test the information he had thus acquired. It is true that he had been fully warned by more experienced motorists that removing and replacing a

clinch tire was no child's play, but those motorists must have used tires turned out by other manufacturers than his. Nothing could be clearer or simpler than the printed instructions for removing, repairing and replacing his own brand of clincher tire. Every step was fully explained, by means both of text and picture, and he could not but be impressed that to follow those instructions meant merely another form of interesting diversion, not only incidental, but supplemental, to the sport of motoring itself. He had studied the instructions to such effect that he was strong in the conviction that only the chance to apply them was needed to open to him this untried diversion. The chance had now come. He had his first puncture on the road. The chief regret that he felt about it was that the road was one much frequented by members of the Golf and the Country Clubs. These knew him, but probably did not know, as he had reason to believe he knew, that repairing an automobile tire on a public road might be a diversion, even to a Judge of the Court of Common Pleas.

Stopping the car at the side of the road, he stepped down into the dust, promptly followed by Donald. Out came the jack, and up went the crippled wheel. The repair kit was brought forth and opened, and its contents spread within reach, in formal array. The manual of instructions was hastily scanned, to make sure that the plan of operations was perfectly clear. Then he selected two tools that looked somewhat like jimmies and proceeded to remove the casing of the tire from the rim. At least, that was what the two tools were for, and he did with them what the instructions directed should be done to remove the casing from the rim, but the results were not such as were promised and pictured by the author of the instructions. The casing didn't come off. It didn't budge. For a time he could not even get either of his jimmies between the casing and the rim. Bead and rim seemed one and indivisible, punch, push, stab and pound with his jim-

mies as he might. Finally he did succeed in prizing up the bead an inch or two, but in trying to get a similar purchase with his second jimmy he lost this advantage, and had to begin all over. When he again prized the bead out an inch or two he called upon Donald to jam the handle of a wrench into the opening, and with this aid, struggling with the desperation of a Laocoon, he gradually tore apart, inch by inch, the circles of canvas and steel. When at last he straightened up, with the tire in his hand, the distant whistles of the city were sounding six o'clock. It had taken him a terrific three-quarters of an hour to do what his manual of instructions had said could be easily done in a pleasant few minutes. He was hot, with a steaming, prickly heat. He ached in every muscle of arms, back and legs. His fingers were stiff and sore to the bones; his hands were covered with a mixture of dirt, sweat and blood. He felt that his clothing next his body was wet, from his collar to his socks. He was weary and weak and shaky. His strongest longing was to lie down and sleep for dreamless æons. And it had seemed to him that almost every minute of that three-quarters of an hour of his struggle men and women of the Golf Club and the Country Club had been driving by and asking him what was the matter? if anything was wrong? if they could telephone for help? if they could tow him in? why he didn't swap that thing for a horse? and countless idiotic impertinences of that quality, until he had turned his back on the road and bent his head deafly over his work whenever he heard the approach of rolling wheels.

Standing now with the detached tire in his hand, and contemplating the wreck of himself, the cost of his victory, he opened his dry lips to say:

"Well, Donald, we've got it off. But before we go any further with our work I wish to make you and Marion a solemn promise. Do you see that little book over there?" pointing to the manual of instructions. "That is a good book, a book of Beneficence and

Truth. Well, I'm willing to put my hand on that book and promise you and Marion—aye, make my affidavit on the book—that, if I live to own a thousand automobiles, I'll never have another clincher tire!"

"I'll never have another clincher tire, either!" Donald agreed.

Macollister next took the punctured inner tube from the casing, substituted a new tube, and then began the work of replacing the tire on the rim. He found that this was as difficult as it had been to detach it, and another three-quarters of an hour was wrestled away before he was ready to pump up the tire and put away his repair kit. Then, starting the engine, he dragged himself limply to his seat beside Marion, who had remained quietly in her place during all the hour and a half whose stress she had silently looked down on.

"Donald," he said, leaning against the comfortably supporting back of the seat and drawing a long, unrestrained breath, "do you remember what it was we had to say, ages and ages ago, on the subject of clincher tires?"

"Yes, sir; we promised that we would never have any more clincher tires."

"Events have occurred since then, Donald, which have confirmed my mind more than ever on that point, and if in the coming years I should appear to linger superfluous on the stage and you should hear me criticized as one who has neither an object nor an interest in life, bear in mind that I authorize you to confound my critics by showing them that I have both an object and an interest in life—to wit: never to have another clincher tire."

He threw in the clutch and the car once more was in motion, the breeze thus created affecting him as a grateful draft of cold water affects one parched with thirst.

The car bowled along at a two-minute rate for about a quarter of a mile, when suddenly there was a loud report, as if a bomb had exploded in its vitals. Marion shrank closer to Macollister and

grasped his arm; Donald sprang to his feet and stood rigidly on the floor of the car, his pale face turning anxiously on Macollister; Macollister instantly threw out the clutch and applied the brake, bringing the car to a quick stop. Then he smiled weakly on Donald.

"I do believe, old man," he confessed, "it was that tire of ours again."

"Oh!" Donald's tension relaxed in a tone of mingled awe and exultation. "Ruck said it would do it!"

They got out again, Macollister and Donald, and, making an inspection, found that the trouble was with the tire over which they had worked so faithfully. The clincher on one side for more than a foot was out of the rim, while the tube had burst, leaving a ragged rent of several inches.

"Had a blow-out, have you, judge?" asked the driver of another automobile who had just then come up and stopped. "Heard it half way back to the golf links."

"I suppose they call it a blow-out," Macollister answered. "It's that right rear tire there, that Donald and I had just spent an hour and a half on at hard labor, taking it off and putting it on again."

"Ah, I see! A regular blow-out," commented the new-comer, stooping down and examining the troublesome tire. "Do you know what caused it, judge?"

"There you have me! Do you know, Donald? Maybe Ruck told you."

"No, sir, he didn't. He just said it would do it," Donald testified.

"Here, I'll show you," explained the new-comer. "Do you see this flap? Well, in putting on your tire you failed to get this flap just right all the way around; and if you don't get the flap of a clincher tire just right you are bound to have a blow-out."

"Do you hear that, Donald? There's still another objection to clincher tires!"

"Oh, all clincher tires don't have flaps," the man added. "Still, they are all hard enough to put on and take off."

"We are not to be offended, are we,

Donald, by any lack of admiration for clincher tires?"

"But let's see what we can do to get you home. I'm an old hand at this sort of business, you know. Have you another tube, judge?"

"Only this one."

Macollister produced the punctured tube which he had removed; the old hand soon patched it, and with Macollister's assistance had the tire ready for travel again in half an hour.

That is how it was that instead of dropping Donald and Marion at their gate by six o'clock, as he had always done previously, Macollister did not get back with them on this occasion until long after seven. Indeed, the twilight had so thickened that he did not notice until he drew up at the gate that a young woman—a very comely young woman, he admitted at the first glance—was standing there.

She came toward them at once, saying in a quick tone of relieved anxiety:

"Oh, I was afraid something had happened to you!"

"Only a punctured tire," answered Macollister, stepping out and lifting Marion down, while Donald climbed out on the other side of the car. "Donald and I tried to fix it, but we are not very expert at fixing ailing tires just yet."

"We aren't going to have any more clincher tires!" announced Donald, walking around to them from his side of the car.

"We have learned that much this afternoon, at any rate," smiled Macollister.

Marion, who had gone at once to the young woman and was standing close against her, clinging to her hand, then did her part, speaking for the first time.

"This," she said, gravely looking up to Macollister, "is Delicia."

Before Macollister could acknowledge the unexpected presentation Donald, who had stepped up in line with him, had the stage.

"This," he authoritatively supplemented Marion, for the enlightenment of Delicia, "is Mr. Bobs."

Delicia's face dimpled outrageously, even while she administered to Donald her quick rebuke:

"Donald! I'm astonished at such pertness! And after all Mr. Macollister's kindness to you!"

But Donald stood his ground.

"He isn't Mr. Macollister," he insisted. "He's Mr. Bobs. He told us so himself. And this is his automobile."

"Now, Donald!" Macollister protested, laying his hand on the boy's head, "I didn't think that of you. Most emphatically, I never told you I was Mr. Bobs. On the contrary, I told you I was Bobs. And we might as well have an understanding right here: if you are not enough my friend to call me Bobs, as my other best friends do, then you shall no longer be Donald to me. You see," he said to Delicia, "there is no question of 'pertness' between us. Donald and I are just two fellow sports, and we have recently passed through some of those trying experiences that draw men together with hooks of steel. Have a care how you risk placing any of the constraints of formality between two old cronies."

Delicia laughed so merrily that Macollister felt decidedly more confidence in his ability to talk to a children's maid. He had been conscious of some doubts on that point at first. But this particular children's maid was not proving at all hard to talk to. Certainly it was easy to laugh with anyone who laughed like that.

"You'd better be careful," she warned him, "how you give Donald such liberties. He doesn't need much encouragement in that direction."

Macollister, making an appointment with the children for another drive several afternoons later, was about to get into his car when Delicia said, Macollister thought as nicely as Marion herself could have said it:

"You have been most kind to them, and they—we all—appreciate it more than—they can tell you."

"I have merely been kind to myself. Oh, by the way, Delicia," he turned toward her and, with one foot on the



step of the car, seeing that the children had started to the gate, added in a lower voice, "you must not let their mother feel the least uneasy because we were so late today. There was no danger at all of any harm, and I will always take the best of care of them."

Now what had he said or done? Why was Delicia blushing so furiously? Why was she looking at him so queerly? Why was she dimpling again so exasperatingly? Why was she, evidently in spite of herself, smiling, almost laughing, in his face?

"I am sure you will, sir," she said; and then she hurried, almost ran, after Marion and Donald.

Macollister, uncomfortably feeling that he was reddening also, and without understanding why, jumped into the car and drove home.

## VII

MACOLLISTER'S library smoke that night was an hour and a half filled with clincher tires and Delicia.

Ruminate of whatever else he might, he could not get away from clincher tires and Delicia. He was still exhausted and sore in body and frayed in mind from his fight with the clincher, although he had done what he could, by means of a bath and a change of clothing, to rid himself of the traces of that incident. Turn which way his reflections might, it was only in the end to sink him again into the sickening slough of despond, desperation and impotence which the very thought of a clincher now reopened beneath his feet. It was intolerable that the fascinating sport of motoring should be beset by such a menace, and but for his comforting knowledge that there were other tires besides clinchers Macollister admitted to himself that the career of one motorist would in all probability have terminated on that eventful day.

And tonight, when he could smoke himself away from thoughts of the clincher it was usually to smoke himself into thoughts of Delicia. As an escape from the clincher Delicia might be endurable; but certainly that is not

an enviable state of mind which must endure the one in order to escape the other. Delicia had made him blush! That, though bad enough, might not be an unpardonable offence if he only knew how Delicia had made him blush. What justification was there for any girl making him blush, without any indication to him what he was blushing about? He didn't remember when he had blushed before, but he felt sure that he had never before done such a thing without having some idea why he did it. And what right had a mere children's maid to make him blush at all? What right had he to blush at anything such a being might say or do? There were people in his world who would erase his name from their dinner lists if they suspected such a thing.

And what had he done to make Delicia blush? He was as much in the dark on that as on the other point. He had merely asked her to take a courteous message to her mistress. He had called her Delicia, but what else could he have called her? It would have embarrassed her still more to call her Miss Delicia. What else but Delicia should he have called her? He had spoken to other maids before, and he knew how they were addressed, and expected to be addressed, by their superiors. Delicia! If she blushed at the name itself, he could sympathize with her; he would even be willing to blush with her. And yet no doubt she gloried in her name. The girl with that sort of name usually does. Delicia! Why not Caramella, or Bonbonnie, or Sweetie? If we are looking for a real argument in favor of a paternal government why not recognize it in the need of government control of christenings? Why not deprive parents of the power of naming their children and transfer that power to a government commission, so constituted as to safeguard future generations at least against names that are silly and absurd? Delicia! Perhaps he had blushed because he had to call any full-grown woman Delicia. Perhaps she had blushed because she had to be called Delicia. To be perfectly honest,

she did not seem to belong to the Caramella class of girls. He would never pitch upon her as a woman to name her own daughter Delicia. Moreover, he would have never pitched upon her as belonging to the ranks of children's maids. That she was beautiful, was irrelevant; but that her beauty was of the quality it was, and that the impression which it made was no less one of breeding and refinement than of beauty, was a very different matter. It was clear that she was quick, sensitive, intelligent; her English was as good as that of Marion and Donald—and the English of Marion and Donald was better than that of any children of their age whom he knew. Perhaps she owed much to her service in the Hurd household. Mrs. Hurd, according to the reports gathered by Mrs. Jack Ormsby, was a woman of widely cosmopolitan experience and virtues; her maids, given Delicia's evident native capital, might improve to marked advantage the opportunities of their environment. Mrs. Jack Ormsby had said that Delicia was either English or Irish. She had an English complexion and Irish eyes. Her animation was more Irish than English; if she had the adaptiveness of the Irish there was hardly a limit to what she might do for herself, with such an exemplar as Mrs. Jack Ormsby represented the worldly widow Hurd to be. But, Macollister concluded, it was very doubtful if Delicia was either Irish or English. There was no suggestion of it in her accent. There was more about her to indicate that she was one of our own American girls—there was that in her soft voice, her free grace, and slender form to indicate that her origin might have been under our open Southern skies. Certainly as reasonable an assumption as any was that Mrs. Hurd had picked her up very young, perhaps in Mrs. Hurd's own rural South Carolina, and that association and travel had done the rest. An American girl such as Delicia seemed to be would be the sort of girl to develop under such transplanting; but would an American girl such as De-

licia seemed to be remain in Delicia's menial position? The thought of it was as much an irritant to Macollister as was Delicia's name.

In fact his smoke tonight, though smoking is claimed by its devotees to be essentially soothing, induced only irritation. He was irritated at Delicia's name, irritated at Delicia's place in the world, irritated at Delicia, irritated at himself for being irritated by anyone of no more importance to him than the maid of Marion and Donald.

Still the devotees of smoking might be justified in demanding a proper allowance for the fact that their theory, that smoking is soothing rather than irritating, was established prior to the invention of clincher tires, and for the further fact that no man who has so recently passed through Macollister's experience with a clincher tire is a fair subject, mentally or physically, on whom to test the soothing efficacy of any theory.

In support of which view it might be competent to introduce as a witness Macollister himself, by whom it could be shown that on throwing away in disgust his cigar he went to bed only to dream that he had died and been condemned to Purgatory, his particular part in Purgatory being perpetually to conduct a side-show the star freak of which was the mythological lady whose hair ran to snakes, the face of this lady being the blushing, dimpling face of Delicia, while her capillary coronal of snakes was a tangle of demoniacally writhing, viciously hissing clincher tires.

## VIII

WHEN he drove out to keep his appointment with Donald and Marion, rest and recuperation had restored him to his normal self. Delicia no longer irritated him. Indeed, on this perfect May afternoon, and in this perfectly running car, irritation was not even a memory. If he thought of Delicia at all, he contemplated with equanimity, if not with indifference, the contingency of seeing, or not seeing, her again. He was no longer curious as to whether in

future she would conduct herself as a well-regulated maid was expected to conduct herself, and as she had failed to do, in certain respects, at their one meeting.

It was well that he had no such curiosity, for Delicia was nowhere to be seen when he came in sight of the Hurd place. Donald and Marion were at the gate, as usual, and he took them up and drove on, with never a word on either side about Delicia. He put them down again at the gate promptly at six o'clock, and therefore Delicia, whose name had not been mentioned during the drive, had no pretext, as before, for awaiting in person their return.

Two days later he repeated the drive, and only once during that hour was the subject of Delicia referred to. They were between the river and the hills of Fincastle, miles away from Delicia. There was nothing in all the picturesque view to remind anybody of Delicia. There was nothing to indicate that anybody was reminded of Delicia. Marion seemed dreamily engrossed in a launch on the river. Donald was stooping over the left front wheel, intent on the operation of the odometer.

"Where's Delicia?" a voice abruptly asked.

Marion started and looked suddenly around them, as if Delicia might have just dropped from the clouds. Donald pulled himself up and turned a bewildered face on Macollister. Macollister's eyes were set straight ahead, and Donald, following his gaze, saw a horse and surrey coming toward them.

"That isn't Delicia!" Donald authoritatively announced.

Macollister slowed down and drew far to the right of the road for the surrey to pass, the horse ambling on lazily indifferent, despite the semi-panic of its driver.

Macollister, his eyes still ahead though there was no longer anything there to require such vigilance, finally spoke again.

"Where did you say Delicia was?" he demanded.

"She—she was in the house when we left home," Marion answered.

"Yes, sir," Donald testified; "she was in the house, sewing on Marion's doll-clothes," unsympathetically, if not disapprovingly.

"She—you are fond of dolls, Marion?" was Macollister's next.

"Oh, yes, sir! I dearly love them."

"Why don't you bring them for a ride sometimes?"

"May I? Won't you care?" delighted. "Sometimes they just cry to come."

"If Marion brings all of them," was Donald's comment, "they'll take all the room."

"But couldn't you hold one or two of them in your lap, Donald?" inquired Macollister, with a twinkle in his eye.

"I?" in astonishment. Then directing a searching scrutiny upon Macollister, Donald caught and read that twinkle of the eye; and his laugh was the laugh of one male with another, in the presence of another, or others, not necessarily, nor usually, masculine.

Thus it was that afterward in their drives Marion always carried one of seven dolls, giving, with scrupulous regularity, each an outing in turn, with the exception of her who had lost an eye and a leg, to whom were allotted two turns to the others' one.

And even Macollister, watching Marion and her make-believe, was sometimes almost ready to confess his ignorance as to whether he, through the instrumentality of his motor car, was affording more pleasure to Marion or the dolls.

Two afternoons later the next of these excursions took precisely the same route as this one. And just at the part of the road between the river and the hills of Fincastle, Macollister, his eyes set ahead to that point of the landscape where the horse and surrey once had been, happened to say:

"Delicia stays in the house most of the time, doesn't she?"

"Oh, no, sir," Marion replied, "not when the weather is nice."

"She stays out of doors nearly as much as we do," Donald declared.

"She plays with us in the yard and



and in the garden," continued Marion; "and she takes walks with us in the woods and the fields and the park."

"And she went with us to hunt wild strawberries, and when blackberries come we are going blackberry picking. And she is going to take us wading in the creek," Donald added.

"I see I shall have to stand on my rights, or she won't be leaving you time to go driving with me."

"You always tell us when you are coming," Marion explained; "and when you are coming in the afternoon she takes us out in the morning, or the next day."

"Or the day before," Donald appended.

"Well," asked Macollister, conscious that he was resorting to an unfair advantage, "would you rather go walking with Delicia, or go driving with me?"

"We'd rather do both," Marion complacently admitted.

"When I'm a man," was Donald's answer, "I'm going to have an automobile like yours."

"I thought you were going to have a pipe like Ruck's," Macollister reminded him.

"But—but I'm going to trade it off for an automobile like yours, only it will be larger than yours—large enough to hold you and me and Marion and Delicia."

"Donald!" chided Marion, mildly shocked.

"That is going to be a fine automobile, I see," Macollister replied; "but until you get it maybe you would be willing to give Delicia your seat in this automobile once in a while?"

That was a question for which Donald did not seem to be prepared. He shifted his position and bored his toe into his ankle, a somber, melancholy cloud meanwhile settling on his countenance. But it soon lifted, at least partially, as he announced his solution of the problem:

"Delicia wouldn't take my seat."

In returning to the Hurd gate Macollister was for the second time late, it

being nearer seven than six o'clock, although no mishap had delayed him. But there was no one this evening to manifest any concern for the children's safety. "This Delicia," Macollister reflected as he drove off, "is learning to have less distrust of automobiles."

He did not see Marion and Donald again for ten days. It was raining on the afternoon of his next appointment with them, and it continued to rain for nearly a week. When fair weather returned it was three days longer before he could find time for the automobile.

Seeing no one as he reached the Hurd gate, for the first time he drove through and up to the house. As he stopped at the front entrance Donald, who was playing near, ran up to greet him.

"How would you like to take a spin today?" Macollister asked. "Where is Marion?"

"She's around here," pointing to the rear of the house; "I'll show you. She's been sick."

"Oh, not much, I hope?"

"Yes, sir; she was pretty sick. The doctor came to see her twice. She's nearly well, though, now."

Macollister, guided by Donald around the house, found Marion. She was in a hammock swung in a summer-house, which was the entrance to a rustic pergola supporting a riot of climbing nasturtiums and roses, morning-glories, clematis and grapevines. There was the drone of bees among the grape blooms, and the gossip of a pair of catbirds on the roof of the summer-house. Through the pergola, at the far end, Macollister caught a glimpse of a tangle of color in the flower garden. Delicia, sitting near Marion, was reading to her, as well as she could with her head drawn down by the child, who was trying to fasten one of the climbing red roses in the reader's hair.

Marion, at sight of Macollister, dropped the rose and clapped her hands.

"Oh, Delicia," she cried in delight, "see who's come!"

Delicia glanced up. If she was embarrassed she showed it more, perhaps, by the abruptness with which she arose

than in any other way. If she changed color at all Macollister did not look at her long enough to notice it. He nodded to her as he passed on to Marion, and afterward he could not remember whether she had said anything to him. He was only sure that she had smilingly nodded to him in return.

He took up Marion in his arms.

"Donald tells me she has been ill," he said, turning to Delicia inquiringly.

"She was not very well for two or three days," Delicia replied; "but she is much better now."

"Well enough for a drive, I hope? It will do her good. The air is fine after this rain, and there isn't a bit of dust."

"Oh, yes, I am well enough! Please let me go, Delicia," Marion pleaded.

"But I'm afraid you are not strong enough yet," Delicia demurred. "You might get tired sitting up so long."

"No, I won't. And if I do Donald will hold me in his lap, won't you, Donald?"

"Delicia will hold you in her lap. Delicia shall go with you. That will be the very thing," Macollister proclaimed.

"But I couldn't very well," Delicia objected. "There isn't room enough for so many."

"Now if we only had Donald's automobile," Macollister smiled at Donald. "Has Donald told you about the automobile he is going to have when he gets to be a man?"

Donald, who was becoming more and more overcast with seriousness, if not with lugubriousness, shifted his weight from his right leg to his left. He opened his lips to speak, but closed them without saying anything. Then he rallied and tried again.

"I'll—I'll let Delicia have my seat this time," was the result. "You—you said maybe I would sometimes," addressing Macollister.

"Bravo, Donald!" Macollister laughed, patting him on the back. "But we will not make such a demand on your gallantry. You shall keep your seat, and Delicia shall have one, too. My automobile will hold all four of us, just as well as yours."

"Oh, won't that be lovely, Delicia?" cried Marion.

"Who'll have to sit in whose lap?" asked Donald, incredulously.

"Never you mind, Donald; you won't have to hold any dolls," Macollister assured him. "Just wait a few minutes till I run to town for the rest of my automobile. I'll be back in half an hour at most," handing Marion to Delicia.

"Indeed, I'd rather not go, Mr. Macollister. It isn't worth all this trouble," Delicia answered with emphasis.

"But you are going," Macollister averred with equal emphasis. "Marion and I are determined to have this drive; we need it; and Marion will need you to look after her. I'll be back in half an hour, remember."

He left, accompanied around the house to the automobile by Donald, who fusilladed him with eager questions.

A few minutes later, when Donald returned to Marion and Delicia, he was ecstatically excited.

"You just ought to see that automobile going back to town!" he shouted, turning a handspring. "I pity old Rowena if she meets it in the road today!"

## IX

MACOLLISTER, in his drive to and from his stable that afternoon, certainly did nothing to ameliorate any of the prejudices which at that time were strongest against the automobile. He ignored all his hitherto scrupulously observed precautions against immoderate speed in the city, and dashed through the streets with a swiftness that provoked a sensation of which he was long in hearing the last. Although his odometer measured five miles between the Hurds' and his own residence, he covered the distance, attached the tonneau to his car, and was back at the Hurds' in less than the half hour that he had allowed himself.

He was not kept waiting, for both Marion and Delicia had their hats on, while Donald was always ready.

The only delay in starting, however, was caused by Donald, who was dis-

posed to doubt that Macollister had brought back the same car that he had taken away, and who manifested a persisting desire to be shown how the conversion from the two-passenger to the four-passenger car had been accomplished. He finally compromised on an explanation, instead of an illustration; then he climbed into the front seat beside Macollister, Marion and Delicia occupying the rear, and the first of the tonneau excursions began.

Altogether, Macollister found it not an uninteresting innovation. Previously his had been the attitude of an instructor to Marion and Donald; now he was more an auditor and spectator, Donald and Marion undertaking, with eager zest, both to instruct and entertain Delicia, calling upon Macollister now and then only for confirmation. Marion, who at Macollister's request had chosen the route, and who had decided on the River Road, devoted herself mainly to pointing out the picturesque beauties of water and land on either side, as Macollister had previously pointed them out to her, although she had little opportunity to do them full justice, or even indicate all of them, since Donald was urgent for Delicia's attention, in his ebullient efforts to show her and explain to her the many marvelous features, workings and equipments of the marvelous car. It was not until they reached that point of the road between the river and the hills of Fincastle that Donald appeared to yield, at least temporarily, to exhaustion either of his subject or of himself. At any rate, here he flagged into silence and settled down reposefully in his seat. Marion, seeing her chance, waved her hand to the right, beginning:

"Look, Delicia! That's Fincastle. That lovely house away up there, that's——"

But she was not permitted to finish. Donald, who had abruptly scrambled to his knees on the seat, had turned and confronted the occupants of the tonneau.

"Here's the place, right here, Delicia," he loudly cried, "where Bobs always asks about you!"

For a few seconds the silence was unbroken, except by the low throbbing of the exhaust and the crinkling of the tires along the road. Macollister, who was looking straight ahead, made no sign of having heard Donald's speech, unless it was by a sudden involuntary pressure on the throttle, causing the car to plunge forward, like a horse under an unexpected spur. Further than that he did not move, nor did he speak, but gave all his attention to the road in front.

It was Marion who finally ventured into the breach.

"Donald!" she expostulated, "you must have forgotten. He doesn't always ask about her here. He hasn't asked about her but twice."

Then Delicia herself spoke. Macollister could not see her, nor was he at all sure of her voice and tone.

"Donald!" was her reproof, "cannot you remember to call Mr. Macollister by his name?"

"Here, Delicia," Macollister interposed, without turning his head to glance toward her, "Donald and I understand each other; and don't you try to make him put on airs with me. Next thing you will be expecting me to call Donald Mr. Hurd."

Just then the car, with a gasp or two, a lurch, and a sigh, came to a dead stop.

"What is the matter?" whispered Marion.

"We'll have to investigate and see," said Macollister, stepping to the ground.

"He'll fix it. He can fix anything," Donald confidently announced, jumping out and taking his position by Macollister's side.

"Hadn't we better get out, too?" Delicia inquired.

"No, no; there is no reason for that. You and Marion keep your seats," Macollister answered.

"You and Marion keep your seats," Donald echoed.

Macollister turned the starting crank several times, but ineffectively. Then he examined the batteries, the commutator, the carbureter, the spark plugs, finding all apparently in good order. This required time, and he

was making a resolute effort to suppress any evidences of the helplessness he was fast beginning to feel and to maintain the mask of that confidence in himself which Donald had so freely expressed in him. Delicia was not Mrs. Jack Ormsby, but he was conscious of just as strong a disinclination to appear powerless in the presence of Delicia as he had experienced in the presence of Mrs. Jack Ormsby and the assembled onlookers. He was growing warm, and the realization of this, with memories of how warm it was possible to become in such emergencies, made him grow warmer. Suspending for a moment his search for the trouble, while weighing the problem what to do next, he yielded to his desire to say something. What he said was:

"It's rather odd, now isn't it, Marion, that we should have a 'break-down' the very first time you bring out Delicia, and we never had one before, nor the slightest trouble of any kind, except a punctured tire? How do you account for it, Donald?"

Donald, who was crouching down, peering under the body of the car, took time for careful deliberation before committing himself.

"I think," he answered, finally raising himself from his stooping posture, though still studiously scrutinizing the car, "it must be either the clincher, or the steam has run out."

"Oh, Donald! Donald!" lamented Macollister. "I might forgive you for falling into the mistake that the clincher is the root of all evil, but how, as a fellow sportsman, am I to forgive you for insinuating to the owner of a gasoline automobile that it has anything to do with steam?"

"Well, I didn't say I was real sure," qualified Donald.

Macollister renewed his search for the cause of the trouble, and almost immediately had the triumphant satisfaction of finding it—satisfaction which he concealed with an unexpressive visage and a matter-of-fact manner as he set about making the necessary repair. His discovery was a break in the secondary wire, within its insulat-

ing cover, and it was but a minute or two before, with a knife and a pair of pliers, he had rejoined the wire, and the engine, at the first turn of the crank, was running again.

"I told you he could fix anything!" Donald exulted, as the car moved off.

"Just hear Donald!" Macollister exclaimed. "And that is my loyal chum, whom some people criticize because he does not call me Mister!"

Nevertheless, Donald's extravagant tribute to his powers was not ungrateful to him, in the new buoyancy of his mood since he had proved superior to the mishap which for a time he had feared would baffle him in the presence of such faith as Donald's, and which he had even feared might necessitate his inglorious resort to some other means of transportation to get his guests home—and on the occasion of one of those guest's first experience with his car. His new spirits continued throughout the rest of the drive, with the result that at times he became almost as talkative as Donald, and frequently supplemented, without waiting to be appealed to, the efforts of Donald and Marion to enlighten and entertain Delicia.

Returning, he did not stop at the Hurd gate, as he had been accustomed to do, but drove through, and up to the house. "The walk is too long for little girls who are just getting well," he remarked, in response to Donald's glance of surprise.

He lifted Marion out and held open the door of the car for Delicia. Then he named the following Tuesday afternoon for the next drive.

"And, Marion," he added, as he resumed his seat in the car, "I'm going to let the tonneau remain, so you may take Delicia with you again."

"But," Delicia quickly deprecated, "indeed, I'm not sure it will be possible for me to——"

"But, but!—never mind the buts, Delicia," Macollister cut her off. "It is best that you be with the children, and you are not a girl to shirk your duty. Besides, Marion and Donald like to have you along. They have never enjoyed any of our trips as much



as they enjoyed the one today. Remember, I shall expect all of you to be ready at five o'clock Tuesday afternoon."

He was off; and as he drove down to the gate he could hear, above the singing of his tires on the gravel, the babble of the children and, once and again, the soft laughter of Delicia.

The girl certainly had a pleasing and infectious sort of laugh, he mused, especially when one's back was turned to her.

X.

NEXT day, glancing over his morning paper, Macollister read this "card," and then re-read it:

TO THE EDITOR OF THE GLOBE:

Have our citizens no rights that the automobile fiends are bound to respect? Is this town the Red Devil's Own? Have we arrived at the day when our women and children must remain indoors or be mangled and murdered at a-mile-a-minute? Must the man who does not possess an automobile, and who wishes to go from one point in the city to another, abandon any such purpose until he can provide himself with an air-ship or until the city can provide him with a subway? Have we no laws for the suppression of these madmen who go about the streets seeking whom they may juggernaut? Have we no authorities for the enforcement of the laws? Are even the men whom we elect and pay to administer the laws observing the laws, or are they leading the law-breakers? Is there anyone who was on Broadway this (Friday) afternoon between 5 o'clock and 5:30, and who escaped with his life from the run-amuck by one of our latest and most prominent automobile cranks, who is not ready to demand that this reign of terror and destruction must end?

PEDESTRIAN.

Macollister already had felt a few recurrent qualms about his dash from and to the Hurd place the afternoon before. Until then he had always been careful not to drive his car on the streets at an excessive speed, and until then he had been of those who deprecated fast driving as the folly of reckless automobilists who were the exceptions, but whose sins were indiscriminately visited upon all automobilists. And now he had been guilty of this folly himself!

"And the worst of it is," was his mental confession after reading "Pe-

destrian's" complaint, "this chap has a case against me."

Later in the day a farmer who lived near town hunted him up. The man had an uncompromising cast of countenance, and he came directly to the point of his visit.

"I want one hundred and fifty dollars for that mule," he announced.

"What mule, may I ask?" Macollister inquired.

"That bay mare mule of mine."

"But I don't wish to buy a mule."

"Well, you can take her or leave her, after you have paid for her. You can suit yourself about that."

"I'm afraid I shall have to ask you to explain to me just what you are driving at."

"To be sho. Well, of co'se then you don't remember meetin' me and that mule just beyant Cherokee Park yistiddy?"

"I believe I do remember meeting a mule—a mule and a spring-wagon, wasn't it?"

"That was me."

"Well?"

"Well, as long as your memory's as good as it is, maybe you remember you was hittin' the road some with that contraption of yours?"

"Well?"

"Well, you skeered the daylight out of that mule, made her run away and stove herself up; besides, you shivered her nerves complete, and when they do that to a mule they are ruint for all future use as a family mule. She ain't worth a dollar and a half now, and I can prove it before any jury in Jefferson County."

"But I don't remember that your mule seemed at all frightened as I passed her."

"Maybe not. She didn't show it then. She's natchully a slow mule about some things. It takes some time to shiver a good mule, and mine wasn't shivered complete until we went on to St. Matthews and turned around and come on back. Anyhow, she didn't give way to it till we got mighty nigh back to where we had met you, and then she see some paper

in the road, and went all to pieces, and bolted, lickity-split, and I had to jam her into the fence to stop her; and I wouldn't give you a dollar and a half for her this minute."

"St. Matthews is two or three miles from the point where you met me, isn't it?"

"Well, it's a right smart piece."

"And I understand that after meeting me you drove your mule all the way to St. Matthews and back nearly to the place where you had met me before your mule took fright, and that I was responsible for it?"

"My God, man, that mule might git skeered a year from now and you would be responsible for it. Once a shivered mule, always a shivered mule; if you didn't shiver my mule, who did? She never got skeered in her life before she met you; she got skeered in forty minutes after she met you. Any jury in Jefferson County would settle that p'int in three winks of a one-eyed man!"

"I'll look into the case. I'll either come out Monday, or send someone out, to make a careful investigation. I'll do the fair thing."

"Oh, I'm not a-goin' to wait till any Monday. I want my money now, or I'll put the case in the hands of my lawyer."

"I have nothing more to say about it at present. I shall do nothing in the matter until after investigation Monday."

"Then you'll have to pay the costs of a suit, as well as for the mule."

He walked out; but in a minute he was back.

"Well," he said, "rather than go to law I'll make you one last proposition. Pay me a hundred and fifty dollars and take the mule, or pay me twenty-five dollars and I keep the mule."

"I shall not do anything before Monday."

On the following day Jack Ormsby brought Macollister a copy of *The Runabout*, a Sunday sheet which he did not usually read.

"Look here, Bobs, is this you?" asked Jack, pointing to a paragraph

in the paper. "What have you been doing?"

Macollister took *The Runabout* and read:

THE PINK TYPHOON—Did you peep out of your cyclone cellar long enough to see it coming down Broadway Friday?—a pink typhoon of swirling, swooping, tornadoing, simooning dust, débris, fleeing inhabitants, panic-stricken chickens, frenzied dogs, blazing gasoline, blasting horns, "shivered" mules, swarming damage suits, and in the vortex of it all a certain distinguished jurist and auto enthusiast, calm, inscrutable and insatiable, at the wheel.

Macollister, smiling a little wearily, returned the paper to Jack.

"It's pretty rough," was his comment, "to call my 'red devil' pink—and that stunning shade of red which Mrs. Jack selected for me!"

Thus it was that, though there were few among Macollister's acquaintances who cared to advertise the fact that they read *The Runabout*, there were fewer who did not understand how his beloved automobile came to be known as "The Pink Typhoon."

## XI

MACOLLISTER found Tuesday afternoon's drive altogether pleasant. Under the direction of Marion, Delicia was taken over a different road, so that, as before, there was much for her to see and hear, and much for Marion and Donald to show and tell. Both the car and Macollister were in spirits worthy of the blue skies and green fields and fragrant air, and even Delicia seemed to relax something of the restraint of her station; while the nearer Delicia came to forgetting her station the nearer Macollister also came to forgetting it. Delicia's station, however, was a thing which Macollister was beginning to realize that it was easier for him to forget than to remember.

For Friday afternoon, which Macollister had fixed as the time of their next drive, Marion had decided on a visit to Iroquois Park. Delicia had seen Cherokee Park, but the beauties of both Iroquois and Shawnee were

unknown to her, and the run to Iroquois was especially favored by Marion and Donald, as it was not only through the glories of Cherokee itself but over miles of winding suburban parkway that was the delight of all true automobilists of the vicinity, such as Marion and Donald had become. But it was raining Friday afternoon, and Macollister did not go out to the Hurds' until the next day. Donald and Marion were at the gate.

"We didn't know whether you were coming today," was Marion's glad greeting.

"But we were hoping you were," Donald admitted.

"We'll get our drive to Iroquois yet," Macollister assured them. "Is Delicia ready?"

"She has gone," was Donald's information.

"Gone?" Macollister echoed blankly.

People of Delicia's vocation were always going, so he had heard from housekeepers; he had wondered why Delicia didn't go, and he had felt some irritation because she didn't go, but he had not expected her to go so suddenly.

"She has gone to town, shopping," Marion explained.

"Oh!"

"She didn't know you were coming today," Marion thought to add.

"But I told her I'd be bound you would," Donald boasted.

"Well, come on; we'll go without her."

Their way was down the macadamized road to Cherokee; over the green knolls and valleys of that noble woodland; out Cherokee Road and across a section of the city to the parkway that winds, between bordering rows of trees and grassy levels dotted with neatly kept suburban homes, to the wooded ridge of Iroquois looming hazily against the horizon seven miles to the south; along the red-graveled road that for nearly three miles circles its base, cleaving the cool bosage of massing shrubbery and primitive forest; up the wild sides of the ridge to its summit; over the rude dirt road that loops its long crest beneath serried trees unplanted by

man and untouched by art; doubling back to the sheer promontory that rises above leagues on leagues of spreading farmlands, plowed fields and velvety meadows, rolling plains, sunny uplands, threading highways, clustered habitations, undulating streams, and banking hills, all basking in the soft lights and tender tints of a day that pulses of Spring and dreams of Summer.

On the way back the parkway and the speedway by its side were gay with vehicles of many kinds—luxurious victorias, graceful phaetons, smart "spiders," trim carts, unpretentious buggies, skeleton wagons and sulkies, homely family surreys, homely family horses, spirited teams, swift roadsters, fat ponies, saucy cobs racing trotters and pacers. Automobiles, though they were then yet an innovation, were not lacking, nor horseback riders, of both sexes. It was the city's favorite drive and favorite hour to take the air.

"There goes Mr. Lumsden," said Donald, as a man dashed by on the speedway, holding the reins of a smoothly moving trotter.

"Is Mr. Lumsden a friend of yours?" Macollister asked.

"No, sir," was the unhesitating reply; "he's a friend of Delicia's."

"Indeed!"

"Donald doesn't like Mr. Lumsden," Marion volunteered.

"What has Mr. Lumsden been doing to you, Donald?" Macollister inquired.

"Nothing," uncommunicatively.

"Then why is it that you don't like him?"

"Because."

"Because," Marion explained, "he played automobile with Mr. Lumsden's silk opera-hat and Delicia got angry about it."

"I didn't play automobile with it," Donald protested; "I just played bucket with it. I played automobile with my red fire-engine."

"And you just played bucket with Mr. Lumsden's hat?" said Macollister.

"Yes, sir; that's all. The automobile got so it had to have water out of the spring, like yours did that time, and I had to have a bucket that would



shut up and stretch out, like yours did, and Mr. Lumsden, his hat does that very way, and I played bucket with it and got some water out of the spring with it—that's all."

"And Delicia got angry over a work of necessity like that? She certainly doesn't understand the needs of automobiles, as you and I do. But how in the world did you have the luck to get Mr. Lumsden's opera-hat?"

"He was sitting on a bench in the yard one night, smoking cigarettes and waiting for Delicia to get ready to go to the theatre with him, and his hat was on one end of the bench, and I just happened along and picked it up and carried it down to the spring and watered my automobile with it. That's every single thing I did."

"And Delicia got angry on account of a little thing like that?"

"I don't reckon she would have got angry if Mr. Lumsden had not acted as he did."

"Lumsden acted? And after leaving his hat within easy reach, and in the darkness of night where an automobilist in distress might feel at perfect liberty to make use of it?"

"Yes, sir; he just told Delicia that he couldn't think of going to the theatre in a hat dripping wet, and Delicia had to stay at home and talk to him."

"Ah, I see. So even as devoted motorists as we, might be justified in making some allowance for Delicia's anger."

"Sir?"

"I was merely about to say, Donald, that when one goes in for motoring it is much more satisfactory to carry his own collapsible bucket than to depend on other people's opera hats."

## XII

THIS man Lumsden crossed Macollister's mind more than once during the next few days.

Who was Lumsden? How was it that he knew Delicia? Why was he inviting her to the theatre? Why was he spending evenings talking to her? Why did Delicia allow it? Why did Mrs. Hurd allow it? He had noticed Lumsden about the club recently, and

it was patent that his orbit was very different from that of Delicia. Men of his class do not as a rule seek the society of girls of Delicia's class for anybody's good, and Macollister was convinced that Delicia was the sort of girl to understand this. And yet here was the fact that she permitted it. Delicia was irritating him again.

Of course if Lumsden was an exception to the rule the case bore a different aspect; but it was not worth while to consider that aspect until it should develop that there was any such aspect to consider.

He made it convenient to lunch with Rainford, who had put up Lumsden at the club, and casually to ask who his friend Lumsden was.

"Lumsden?" Rainford had replied. "A college mate of mine, and a fine fellow. Belongs to one of the oldest families in Philadelphia, is a physician by profession, but does not practice, being immensely wealthy and a lover of the good things of the world that money can buy. He is a mighty traveler and has spent the past ten or fifteen years wandering over the earth. He has only recently returned to this country, and says he is now trying to see a little of America. Besides myself, I believe he has a few friends here, whom he met abroad. I think you would like him, judge."

But Macollister did not like him, for all Rainford's good words of the man. And he felt a distinct relief when, after lunch, Rainford in his desire to bring the two together looked the club over and failed to find the Philadelphian. Macollister knew himself to be a man of prejudices, but in cases like this he followed the law of least resistance and went with, rather than against, the current of his prejudices.

However, if Delicia was in any way responsible for Lumsden's presence in this part of the world Macollister saw no indications of it during the next ten days. His automobile excursions included another visit to Iroquois, followed by one to Shawnee, and long drives out the Seventh street road, the Bardstown, the Brownsboro and the

Shelbyville pikes, Delicia accompanying the children on all these occasions, and Lumsden at no time being seen or spoken of.

It was not until the afternoon that Macollister stopped at the Hurds' with the expectation of driving on to Anchorage, a trip that Delicia had not yet made, that he heard Lumsden's name again. Delicia, he was informed by Marion and Donald, could not go with them today. Delicia was not at home. Delicia was out driving. Delicia was out driving with Mr. Lumsden.

So the trip to pretty Anchorage was without Delicia. It had been without Delicia before, but then that had made no difference. That may have made no difference today, although, whatever the reason, there did seem to be a difference. And there was a difference, too, between this trip to Anchorage and the recent drives over the Shelbyville, the Bardstown and other roads. That may have been due partially to the fact that there was no one in the party to Anchorage today who had not been over the route before, and consequently no one whose pleasure was the pleasure of first sight, and whose enlightenment out of their wealth of greater experience, was the pleasure of others.

At any rate, both Macollister and Marion were unusually silent, and even Donald had much less to say and to do than was his wont.

For instance, on the return from Anchorage, when they were fully half-way home, Donald had not spoken more than three times. For ten minutes now he had been mute, as well as still. Then he swung one foot forward and backward, remarking glumly:

"I don't see what Delicia wants to go driving in a trap for when she can go in an automobile."

"Spoken like a true enthusiast, Donald," Macollister exclaimed, "but even the true enthusiast should recognize, my brother sportsman and progressist, that not only is the world wide enough for both the automobile and the horse, but that it needs them both, whether for utility or for pleasure."

"Yes, sir," responded Donald, not so

much in a tone which indicated that he was quite sure of his readiness to admit the point, as one which suggested that he did not feel disposed just then to argue it.

There was another mile or two of silence, finally broken by Marion, who for some time apparently had been immersed in meditation that had not been disturbed by the philosophical exchanges between Donald and Macollister.

"Mr. Macollister," she said, with plaintive sweetness. (Marion preferred to follow Delicia instead of Donald in her manner of addressing Macollister.)

"Yes, Marion," he answered, turning to look at the earnest inquiry of the serious face and wistful eyes.

"How old is a little girl who is six years old?"

Macollister did not answer at once. When he spoke it was with Marion's own gravity.

"I am afraid you ask too hard a question for me, Marion," he said. "How old is a little girl who is six years old? I think that depends. She is so young that life is all before her, and yet sometimes she is so old that the oldest of us—even Solomon, if he had lived to grow in wisdom to this good day—would be but ignorant babes in her presence."

"Huh!" Donald scoffed. "I know how old a girl is who is six years old!"

"Perhaps you do, Donald. No doubt you think you do. But let me urge you not to expose your opinion to public criticism. I have a strong conviction, somehow, that there are a few things which you and I do not know as much about as we know about clincher tires."

They were now not more than a mile from the Hurd place. The sun had sunk behind the wooded hills that marked the curving sweep of the distant river. The perfect light that is not of the day nor yet of the dusk was in the sky and on the earth. The utter calm and rest that mark the completion of another diurnal cycle of action and energy were over all things. Beyond that of the faithful automobile, which Mac-

ollister had now throttled down to a loafing slowness, there was no motion save the hesitant leaping of a young rabbit by the roadside, no sound except the clear call of a nighthawk somewhere overhead. The sweetness of the lindens and the clover was in all the still air.

Presently there was another sound, as beyond a bend in the road the roll of wheels and the hoof-beats of a horse became audible. A few seconds more and Lumsden, driving a smoothly moving trotter, with Delicia beside him on the seat of the high cart, turned into view.

At sight of the automobile Lumsden, who had been holding careless reins, convulsively clutched them taut, throwing the horse out of his easy gait, and immediately afterward flung out his hand, gripping the whip, in warning to Macollister to stop.

But Macollister did not need this warning. As soon as he saw Lumsden's manner of gathering up the reins, Macollister knew that he had a nervous horseman to deal with, however well disposed the horse might be, and that this was one of those very common cases in which the horse, if he does not take fright at an automobile, is likely to take fright at the action of his driver. Macollister, therefore, had instantly pulled to the side of the road and stopped both the car and the engine.

Lumsden's horse, startled and bewildered by the conduct of his driver, came on prancing, then plunging from right to left and left to right, while Lumsden desperately jerked and sawed the reins and at the same time fiercely plied the whip. Macollister, seeing that Lumsden was losing all control of the animal, jumped to the ground and hastening forward a few steps seized the bridle. The wheels of one side of the cart were by this time off the road-bed, in a gully, and there was some probability of the vehicle turning over.

"Put up that whip!" Macollister ordered Lumsden. Then, hardly less imperatively: "Get out, Delicia!"

"Kindly release my horse, sir!" Lumsden demanded. "Keep your

seat," he said to Delicia; "there is not the slightest danger."

"Get out, Delicia," Macollister repeated, "or you may be thrown out."

Delicia hastily obeyed without further hesitation.

"Release my horse, I tell you!" Lumsden again demanded, with increasing anger.

"As you please," said Macollister, complying.

"I insist on your resuming your seat," Lumsden urged Delicia.

"I think you had better go back with us in the car, Delicia," Macollister announced.

"This is outrageous, sir!" Lumsden exclaimed. Then turning his head, as the horse danced forward, he called to Delicia:

"I assure you there is no occasion for this foolish alarm. 'You will be perfectly safe with——'"

But the horse was jumping and plunging again uncontrollably, and Lumsden was carried down the road so rapidly that the completion of his assurance, if there was one, was inaudible.

Macollister walked over to the car and held the door open.

"Get in, Delicia," he said.

But Delicia seemed undecided.

"Thank you," she replied, after a moment, "but I am with Mr. Lumsden, and I think I'd better wait for him."

"Wait? How long? Judging by the direction and the gait he is going it will be night before he succeeds in turning that horse around and getting back in this part of the country. Besides, even if he got back it would not be safe for you to trust yourself to that horse again today—and that driver. Come."

It did look as if there was little prospect just then of Lumsden returning soon. The horse was now in a swinging gallop, and Lumsden's vigorous tactics of sawing the reins with one hand and wielding the whip with the other only made the beast the more unmanageable. The cart was already a half mile distant when Delicia answered:

"But suppose something should

happen to Mr. Lumsden? We can't go on and leave him like this."

"It strikes me that Mr. Lumsden has left us. Furthermore, being so sure that no harm could come to you from that horse and that driver, he is no doubt as sure that no harm can come to him under the same conditions. And again furthermore, he has categorically expressed himself, as you may bear me witness, that he is radically, not to say violently, opposed to accepting my assistance, as in any sense either needed or agreeable. Come; get in. I will take you and the young folks home, and then, if you say so, I will drive back on Mr. Lumsden's trail until I ascertain that all is well with him, or until I have picked up the pieces."

Delicia no longer demurred, but stepped into the tonneau.

"There you are," said Macollister, as he closed the door, "in your proper place with the children—where you should have been all along."

Delicia started a little, as if his words had stung her to resentment. Then she turned those Irish eyes full upon Macollister; dancing lights came into them; followed not only by the exasperating dimples and smile that he had seen in conjunction before, but by a more exasperating soft laugh.

Macollister stooped and seized the starting crank, which he revolved with a great deal more energy than was necessary.

"The impudent baggage!" was his mental epithet as he took his seat and threw in the clutch.

But the car had not gone a hundred yards before Donald, eyeing him curiously, asked:

"What are you laughing at, Bobs?"

"Donald," he replied, "do you remember the remarkable question that Marion put to me today and that you were so sure you could answer?"

"About the six years?"

"The same. Then you probably also remember what a floundering attempt I made to answer it."

"I—I reckon so, sir."

"Well, I shall have to ask you to

believe that I feel unable to deal with your question any more satisfactorily than with Marion's. You and Marion are frequently too much for me, Donald."

"Yes, sir."

A few minutes later, having left the children and Delicia at the house, he called back as he was driving off:

"Mr. Lumsden is all right, Delicia. He has succeeded in turning around. He has got his horse in hand. He is, as you may see, safely on his way back."

### XIII

ONE effect on Macollister of this demonstration before his eyes that Lumsden had sought an opportunity to be with Delicia and that Delicia had not avoided it, was to increase his desire for a straightforward talk with that young woman. As yet, whatever words he had exchanged with her had been in the presence of Marion and Donald, and had only been of such character as a man of his station might choose with a girl of Delicia's station, or rather with a girl in her station whom he could not help regarding as decidedly above it. But almost from the first he had been impelled to overstep such restrictions and talk to her as he might talk to any other girl he knew. And he had been impelled still more strongly to talk to her about herself.

His chance came a day or two after his encounter with Delicia and Lumsden, and while, until it did come, he had not been sure that he would take it, he was prompt in resolving that doubt when the occasion presented itself.

He was driving on Fourth avenue one afternoon when he saw Delicia standing at a corner. The time in which he determined his plan of action was the time in which he continued out on the street for twenty yards and then, turning his car, came back and drew up at Delicia's corner.

"Which way, Delicia?" was his greeting.

She nodded to him with a bright



smile. "I am on my way home; I am waiting for a Walnut street car."

"Why, a Walnut street car won't take you home," he said, in some surprise.

"But it will take me to the entrance of the park, and a delightful walk through the park will take me nearly home."

"Is that the way you came to town today?"

She nodded affirmatively. "I like to come that way when I have the time and the weather is good."

"The weather is good for a little drive this afternoon. Get in and I will take you home," stepping to the pavement as he spoke.

"But—I—I don't think——"

"Never mind. Don't think. Just get in. The day is too fine to miss. Besides, there are some things that I wish to talk to you about particularly."

Delicia had been accustomed to doing as she was told when told to get in Macollister's automobile, and she made no exception to that rule in this instance. With a light laugh she gathered up her skirts to enter the tonneau.

"Not there," Macollister objected. "Here, on the front seat. You have never tried that. And, you know, I want to talk to you."

Again she did as she was told, and Macollister, taking his place beside her, steered the car out Fourth to Broadway. Instead of continuing up Broadway—the direct route to the Hurds—he abruptly turned, at the intersection of Third, out that street.

"There is plenty of time," he said; "and you have never seen the boulevard at its best, or the view from the top of Iroquois on a clear day like this."

"Oh, that glorious Iroquois!" Delicia answered. "But it must be glorious on all days!"

It might be a question for Macollister to smoke over in his library, to what extent he was influenced, in changing his course to the fashionable drive of the city, by his desire for plenty of time to say what he might wish to say to Delicia, and to what extent by the

spirit that sometimes stirred him to kick aside the conventional canons with which "society" circumvallated itself. He was aware that if society knew who Delicia was it would be shocked to see him driving out the parkway with her, and today there was something in his mood which stirred him from indifference to a preference that society should know who Delicia was.

Certainly, if such knowledge was lacking, there was nothing in Delicia's appearance to indicate that Macollister, in sharing his car with her on society's parade ground was affording society an opportunity to be shocked. Macollister, glancing at the trim figure by his side—the quiet effectiveness of her attire, the dressing of her hair, the texture of her skin, the impress of fineness of spirit and form in her face—felt that in a city noted for its beautiful women he could have chosen none whose quality of beauty would have been more distinctive or more satisfactory to a refined taste. Delicia, unless her looks belied her, it occurred to Macollister, might as well have been called Patricia. Nor was it uncommon to see in this city a girl in humble life who looked the patrician; and often she was in blood, as well as in appearance, a patrician.

Macollister, on the outward drive, made no effort to talk to Delicia of other things than the passing show and similar suggestions of the parkway, regarding which he was as willing and as well qualified to furnish her enlightenment as Marion and Donald had been on excursions over other routes. But stopping the car on the high shoulder of Iroquois, he abruptly began, after waiting a few minutes that the noble view below them might have her undistracted contemplation:

"Delicia, how long are you going to keep up this sort of thing?"

She looked at him quickly, curiously, and apparently as if a little frightened.

"What sort of thing?" she asked in a voice that tried to be natural.

"Taking care of Mrs. Hurd's children. How long are you going to allow yourself to be content with such a place?"



"I—I like it," she replied, turning her eyes again to the view below her, "and do not wish to give it up."

"It's easy enough to see you like it; and that is the singular thing about it. Now don't think I mean to be meddlesome in speaking to you so bluntly about your personal affairs; but I have wished to ask you for some time if you did not propose, or care, to—to make some change in your manner of life?"

"No," she said gently but promptly; "I am satisfied as I am."

"That is just the impression you make on me; and that is what puzzles me so."

"Why?" she inquired, after a little.

"Because I cannot understand how a girl who—who is so superior to such work as yours, who is capable of such different things, and who is naturally qualified for a life so much broader and more interesting, should have no desire for such a life, but should actually choose a life so—so absolutely apart from all that girls of her quality regard as desirable, or endurable. Why, Delicia—and you must not think I am trying to say pleasant things to you; I feel more like saying unpleasant things to you—it is perfectly plain that you are out of your element; that you were not born to the kind of life you are leading; and that you cannot be your real self under any such false conditions. You yourself must know that you are—are adapted for the things that other girls like best; that you could have almost any career that other women have."

She smiled faintly, but did not turn her eyes toward him as she answered:

"I should not care at all for what are known as women's careers. To be with Marion and Donald, and to do what I can for them is career enough for me."

"That sentiment would have my hearty approval if uttered by Marion and Donald's mother. No doubt you are very fond of Marion and Donald—you cannot be fonder of them than I am—but because you are fond of them, or they of you, is no reason why you should make an altogether unnecessary sacrifice of your life to them.

However, if you don't and won't realize this, it can hardly be worth while to argue the matter with you."

She flashed a quick glance at him, and then laughed. It was a very subdued little laugh, but it was a laugh.

Macollister also laughed, in spite of himself.

"You are incorrigible, Delicia," he declared; "and I suppose it is useless for me to say anything more on the subject, though I haven't yet really said what it was my main purpose to say. You see—well, hang it! While it does seem like an attempt to interfere with Mrs. Hurd's domestic affairs, even to the extent of trying to induce or provoke one of her—her employees to leave her, I have been wishing to tell you that if you should have any inclination to give up your present—occupation and go in for something more suitable for you, I'd be only too glad to do anything possible to—to help smooth the way for you; that is—well, of course, I don't know what I could best do, or what you might prefer, but I have a splendid sister in Washington who takes the greatest interest in—in cases like this, and I know nothing would please her better than to be allowed to give you the benefit of her ripe experience, through suggestions, influence and co-operation, to—to make it easier for you to leave the rut into which you have fallen. I could arrange without any trouble to bring you two together; and I wish, and I am sure she would wish, that you would let me do it. I don't know whether I am putting this at all intelligibly. I feel that I am making a bungle of it. But I—that is, if there is anything that you would let anybody do——"

He desisted, as if despairing, at least for the moment, of saying what he wished to say in the way it had best be said.

Delicia's eyes were now full upon him. There were new and softer lights in them. No trace of a smile was on her gentle face, and her low voice was mellow with feeling as she spoke:

"Oh, Mr. Macollister, I do under-

stand you, believe me. And your consideration of me touches me. I am grateful, you must know, and am proud that you take such interest in me. But please do not think of it any further, for I assure you, I have no wish to change my lot."

"All right, Delicia," he replied in a tone which admitted his defeat, though at the moment he was thinking how rarely lovely she was in this new aspect and how much more removed than ever she was from her class; "I'll try not to lecture you any more, though I still insist you need lecturing, badly."

"Mr. Macollister, I——"

She began hesitatingly, a slight tremor in her voice, only to pause, while her eyes fell and her color slowly deepened.

"Mr. Macollister," she repeated, with evident effort, lifting her eyes again to him with a courage which quickly collapsed, "you ought to know—I ought to—long before this—eh, Mr. Macollister, it is getting late, isn't it? Please take me home!"

She covered her burning cheeks for an instant with her hands. Then she impetuously threw out her palms, as if she would fling her blushes to the winds and—laughed.

But Macollister, groping for his starting crank, had a bewildered impression that her laughter verged on tears.

#### XIV

PONDERING over this interview tended the more to cloud instead of to clear Macollister's mind regarding Delicia. Who she was, and why she chose to be as she was, were questions about which he was even more in doubt now than before. Perhaps the one definite result of the interview was to confirm Macollister's gradually formed deduction that, whoever Delicia was, and why she was, she was something more than a mere maid to the Hurd children. A plausible possibility, he reasoned, was the blood-relationship of Delicia to Mrs. Hurd. There was everything about Delicia to support the theory that her family was good, and that she might have entered the household of a relative because thrown upon her own

resources for a livelihood, and that she might have become so attached to her associations there, particularly to such children as Marion and Donald, as to be unwilling to leave them.

If this theory had pressed upon him when he first met Delicia it would have prompted him, he admitted, to adopt an attitude toward her very different from the one into which he had fallen.

For one thing, he would not have been so free in addressing her as "Delicia," or so easy in assuming the authority to dictate her actions. But he had jumped at the conclusion that she was only a maid, to be placed on the same plane with other maids, and he had governed himself accordingly.

He realized now that there had been very little, beyond Mrs. Jack Ormsby's chatter, to justify such a jump. He had realized this for some time, but—he had jumped, and had landed on not uninteresting territory. His conclusion may have been wrong, but Delicia had not corrected it. Delicia may not have been a mere maid, but she had permitted him to believe that she was. It may be that he should have called her "Miss" somebody, but she had allowed him to call her Delicia. Perhaps his manner toward her should have been that expected of him by women of his own class, but Delicia had been willing to heed when he had elected to assert authority. If Delicia was, indeed, more than a mere maid, the situation was all the more novel and diverting.

He readily acknowledged to himself that he had made no effort to discover just who and what Delicia was. That, at least to a degree sufficient for the conventional readjustment of their relations to each other, ought not to be difficult. He might have questioned Marion and Donald; he might have questioned Delicia herself; he might—But wherefore? Why should he not let well enough alone? Why, by making an unnecessary move, should he risk spoiling a conjunction that piqued his curiosity less than it ministered to his pastime? He liked to assert authority over Delicia. He liked to call her Delicia. She fitted perfectly in his

scheme of the car and Donald and Marion.

The one thing, so he told himself—the one thing besides Lumsden—that disturbed his quiet content in this scheme was the fact that he had enough human interest in Delicia to cause him, now and then, a moment of dissatisfaction with Delicia's lot, and with Delicia's apparent satisfaction with it.

It was at such a moment, he reflected with a slight nettle of discomfiture, that he had yielded to his human impulse to take Delicia on the drive to Iroquois and commit the clumsy proffer of his counsel and assistance.

It was the day after the Iroquois incident that Jack Ormsby, meeting Macollister on the street, stopped him to inquire:

"Look here, Bobs, who is this pretty girl you have been going with so much lately?"

"What, another? Which one?" Macollister countered.

Jack was keenly interested in all of Macollister's associations with "pretty girls"—only less, perhaps, than was Mrs. Jack, who had made it her mission to "marry him off" ever since she had become Mrs. Jack—and it was not infrequently that Jack manifested such curiosity as in this instance; curiosity that sometimes was modified by sanguine expectation and sometimes by solicitous dread.

"Oh, that slender, rather distinguished-looking girl," he specified, "that you have been seen with so often in your auto lately, sometimes with two children and sometimes alone. She must be a stranger: nobody seems to recognize her, and everybody is asking me who she is."

"Ah, I think I know whom you mean," Macollister answered. "Those children are old Donald Hurd's; and the girl, well, I suppose she is their maid, or something of that kind."

"Their what? Their maid?" Jack exclaimed incredulously. "You are joking!"

"I am perfectly serious."

"But—good Lord! Bobs, what are you thinking of? I might understand

how you put the maid in the car with the children, but—but you take the maid out minus the children! That's what I can't understand!"

"Don't try to understand too much, Jack," Macollister smiled. "I don't, and I find it more comfortable."

"But, Bobs, old man, what will everybody say? What—what—?"

"We could probably make some good guesses, Jack, but is it worth while? I think it very likely that if we wait a few days now we shall find out."

"Bobs, you—you are the damndest, when you take it into your head to be!"

"Come around some night, Jack, when we shall have a better opportunity to talk about it."

Jack was not long in acting on this suggestion, bearding Macollister in his library three nights later.

"Look here, Bobs, I'm here to have this matter out with you!" he proclaimed, without any circumlocution.

"What matter, Jack?" pushing him the cigars.

"The matter of the Hurds' maid. Why, the whole town is buzzing about it since it found out who she is."

"So it has found out who she is, has it?" Macollister smiled.

"Of course. You can't expect to keep that sort of business secret."

"I never expected to keep it secret. Otherwise I should have sworn you to eternal silence when I told you about it, Jack."

"Oh, well, I never mentioned it to anyone except Florry." (Florry was Mrs. Jack.) "And you know you haven't a better friend on earth than Florry. She's distressed into a sick headache over the way people are going on about it."

"I am sorry, then, especially for her sake, that people are going on about it. But, you remember, we agreed that they would."

"Bobs, it's outrageous. I don't think you can realize how contemptibly they, even those you have had a right to consider your friends, are acting about it. They are saying things to Florry which, if they said

to me, would get somebody into trouble—that is, if it was a man who said them. Florry thinks that some of them are going to cut you, and the others are going to make it mighty disagreeable for you. She heard all sorts of rumors, and some of them she verified. You wouldn't suspect how bad it is, Bobs—how near you are to the brink of social darkness"—and Jack himself relaxed into a smile—"unless I told you of one in particular."

"Tell on, Jack; I am braced for the worst."

"Bella Christine Atterbury has crossed your name off her list!"

Macollister laughed outright, and Jack joined him only less heartily.

"Has it come to that, Jack?"

"The merciless loyalty of a friend in need compels me to inform you that Florry says she has it on the best authority."

"Then better give up the fight for me, my valiant friend; for you see it is already lost."

Bella Christine Atterbury was somewhat of a local celebrity as long ago as the days when Cave Hill Cemetery was considered the town's chief feature of interest to be pointed out to strangers. Personally she was not unattractive, and she held a position of prominence, and even leadership, in the city's society. But years ago it had leaked out that she cherished a singular crochet, and the legend, whether fabricated or exaggerated, had become a part of local history. It was to the effect that Miss Atterbury kept with scrupulous care a list of those persons whom she intended to invite to her wedding; that the corner-stone of her social creed was her conviction that she could pay no one a higher honor or greater reward than to enter his name on this list, and that she could visit on him no such blighting penalty as to erase his name from it. The rumor was that she kept this list as a sort of balance sheet in the clearing-house of her personal relations, and although the rumor also was that she guarded even the existence of this list so jealously that she did not suspect it was known beyond the bosoms of two

or three confidential intimates, yet more than one name, as the years passed, had been generally bruited around as having suffered cancellation. But, so rumor credited her, it was not a part of Bella Christine Atterbury's system of rewards and punishments that these should be advertised to the public. It was sufficient that Bella Christine herself should be aware that any given person was to be invited to her wedding, or was to be denied that distinction. That the lady had passed the age at which, according to statistics, marriage is probable, did not impair the popular faith that this list was still religiously revised up to date. Gossip had never even connected her name with a love affair, but it had immemorially connected it with a purpose to marry some time, and it did not doubt that it was her steadfast purpose yet to perform this final act of her system before she died, if for no other reason than that it was the final act of her system.

"It strikes me as pretty rough on you, Bobs," Jack Ormsby added, "that you, one of the eligibles whom Miss Bella Christine is said once to have had under consideration for participation in her wedding as the bridegroom, should now be summarily scratched from the list of invited guests. But seriously, now, I wish you would get rid of that infernal 'Pink Typhoon' of yours. If you don't I'm afraid it will be the ruin of you. Poole really believes he has a chance to defeat you for reelection, and he is counting as much on the auto to do the business as on anything else. And it strikes me that he may be more than half right. Down in the Thirteenth Ward they look with suspicion on any man who owns an automobile, and Groesbeck, the Boss, has come out squarely for Poole. As near as I can get at it your offense against Groesbeck was that you dashed by him one day in your car and not only spattered him with mud, but failed to speak to him. I tell Groesbeck's friends that you didn't see him—that you didn't see anybody when you first took to motoring; that all your eyes—and you could have



used more if you'd had 'em—were monopolized in steering the thing through the streets and keeping out of the hospital and the junk-heap. But it is wasting time to talk to them: Groesbeck has gone over to the Poole camp, and he's there to stay. You ought to know, Bobs, that a candidate in this town can't afford to fail to speak to the Groesbecks, and can't afford to keep a rig that daily conduces to his failure to speak to the voters and 'workers.' And there was really no excuse for your spattering Groesbeck with mud. If you had been driving in anything but an automobile you would have had wits enough for other things to bear in mind that you are likely to meet Groesbeck anywhere in that part of town, and that while Groesbeck does not have his shoes polished every day, he may have them polished every Spring. Then the Poole people say that the farmers are turning against you, to a man, and cite as evidence the case of one of them who is going to sue you for ten thousand dollars for shivereeing his mule and undermining his own constitution. I don't know just what shivereeing a mule is, but the Poole people seem to have the utmost confidence in their ability to convince the rural precincts that your automobile is guilty of any charge a stock-owner can bring against it. And it even seems to be raising up enemies for you among strangers. One of Poole's friends has been heard to hint that this rich Philadelphian—Lumsden his name is, isn't it?—has expressed a desire to contribute to Poole's campaign fund. Then, as if it wasn't bad enough to risk motoring away your chances of reflection as judge, here you are, with the help of a servant girl, doing your best to motor away your social standing. Don't you think it time to pull up short on the whole thing, Bobs?"

"Jack," Macollister replied, with amused good humor, "it ought not to be difficult for us to come to an understanding. If Poole's friends are as stanch and zealous as mine, Jack Ormsby at the head of them, then he

may give us a good fight; perhaps a winning one. But Poole is not disturbing me in the least. I have never sought the office I hold, and I did seek the automobile. If it came to the point that the voters should demand that I choose between the office and the automobile, then it would be the automobile, and no repining."

"Well, you certainly have it bad!"

"It would be the same if they should demand that I choose between the office and any personal privilege or predilection in which I saw fit to indulge. I would not have any office that I could not have without surrendering in any way my personal independence. And as to the other branch of your complaint, Jack, I am just as free to say that I have found it very pleasant to motor with the help of a servant girl, as you express it, and I propose to continue that pleasure, unless she herself should withhold her help, or unless some better reason for discontinuing it should develop than is now apparent. Your presentation of the servant girl problem' does not perplex me at all. And rest assured, Jack, that, whatever her circumstances may be, she is a lady, and her natural and proper place is with ladies and gentlemen, whether in a motor car or elsewhere."

And this was the wall of what Jack Ormsby called "Bobs' bull-headedness" upon which Jack's protestations and arguments during the remainder of the interview could make no impression.

## XV

WHEN Jack Ormsby reached home that night and told Mrs. Jack the result of his visit to Macollister he added:

"I'm at the end of my rope and I'm glad I have sense enough to know it. Not another word do I say to Bobs about this thing—especially about the girl. And you must be careful, too, Florry, not even to mention the subject to him. If he takes up the idea that we are nagging him about her, or acting unfairly toward her, there is no telling what he may do. He is obstinate enough and



cranky enough to marry her, unless we let him alone."

"Marry her? That horrid creature? Oh, Jack! You can't believe it!"

"Believe it? I've come to the conclusion that it is a waste of beliefs to form them about Bobs in advance. Who would ever have believed, for instance, that he would go in for automobiles? But I know him well enough to feel sure that if he is to be saved now he must work out his own salvation. If outsiders set themselves to preach or prod him into salvation, the effect will almost surely be to drive him in the other direction. I saw enough to see that tonight. Remember my warning to you now, Florry—not a syllable to him on this subject."

"But he ought to know how people are talking about it, and how is he to know unless his friends tell him?"

"I have told him already—told him everything you told me—and it did more harm than good. It is likely to play the mischief if we keep it up."

Mrs. Jack did not argue the point further. But she was not without her own resources, and, marshaling these, she decided that it was not impossible to heed Jack's warning and yet do her duty by Bobs. She was wise enough not to reveal this decision to Jack until she had acted upon it.

That was promptly, as the emergency required; for it was only the following evening, after she had restrained her secret during dinner, and after she and Jack had the house to themselves, that she disclosed to him that, if he had been at the end of his rope she had not been at the end of hers.

"Oh, Jack," she began, perching herself on the arm of Jack's chair, "I have something lovely to tell you!"

"Yes?" he inquired, for he had long since quit trying to guess Mrs. Jack's riddles.

"It's about Bobs," replied Mrs. Jack, portentously.

"More of the same kind?" Jack asked, with resignation.

"And that dreadful girl."

"I suppose so," faintly sighing.

"It's all right now, Jack," triumphantly; "I fixed it myself."

"Fixed what? What's all right, Florry?" suddenly alert.

"Why, about dear old Bobs and that creature. He is to quit going around with her. I attended to that today."

"You?" with awakening alarm. "You attended to it?"

"Yes, my noble lord and master," with a beaming bow of mock obeisance, "I—poor, insignificant little I—all by myself."

"Good heavens, Florry! you don't mean to tell me you have been tackling Bobs about that?"

"No, indeed! Not after your warning last night. You know I wouldn't think of disregarding your wishes so, Jack! But it didn't seem to me that talking to Bobs was the only way to do what we wanted to do. And so, after you had failed in your way, and given up the fight, I decided to try another way. And I did. And it worked beautifully. And it's all arranged, Jack."

"All arranged, is it?" echoed Jack, settling back in the chair, as if he were fortifying himself for the worst.

"Yes, dear. Of course it was a delicate matter; but I never forgot that for a second; and, indeed, I think I managed it better than a man, like you, could have done, just because I am not a man."

"I daresay," murmured Jack.

"And I don't believe you could guess in a hundred guesses how I did it."

"No, Florry," in a monotone, "I don't believe I could."

"Well, you see it was this way—and it was very simple. I called on Mrs. Hurd."

"Oh! you called on Mrs. Hurd," repeated Jack, lifting his eyes to the clock.

"Yes; I went straight to the girl's mistress, instead of wasting time going to the girl herself, or to Bobs."

"I presume I begin to see," mused Jack, his eyes still on the clock.

"And I was sure I had made no mistake the minute she came in the room, and she was just as sweet and lovely

as she could be, and it wasn't at all hard to make her understand, and it wasn't a bit awkward, as I had feared it might be. You see I was very careful to be extremely tactful and—and diplomatic, and she was so sensible and sympathetic that I managed it nicely, and she is coming to one of my teas soon. I told her, a little at a time—just feeling my way gradually, you know—that of course it must seem queer for me to call on her on such a mission, but that our devotion to Bobs—yours and mine—was my excuse; and that we were awfully distressed about him, and we could do nothing with him, and that our only hope was through her assistance; and that we were sure that she did not know how her maid was carrying on; and that Bobs was ruining himself and the very best people were turning against him and threatening to cut him; and that he wouldn't listen to reason when his friends tried to bring him to his senses; and that I had made up my mind, after everything else had failed, to take the responsibility on my own shoulders of going to her and in perfect confidence, as of one woman with another, laying the case before her and suggesting, if she could do so without any—any embarrassment or inconvenience to herself, that she use her influence or authority with the girl to keep her away from Bobs. And she was just as lovely about it! She was so interested, and seemed real sorry for poor, foolish old Bobs, and said she was ever so glad I had come to her and been so frank with her, and assured me we need have no more uneasiness about it, and that she would take the girl in hand at once and put a stop to all this mischief-making. And I know she will keep her word, Jack. So you see everything will be all right again, and you needn't worry about Bobs any more. And—and—now don't you think I have done pretty well in such a bad case?"

Jack, looking up into her flushed, eager face, smiled, though a little languidly.

"You have done marvelously, prodigiously, Florry," he said. "I am quite

sure I should never have been equal to it, nor any other man. Do you know," slowly rising and laying his hand caressingly on her hair, "it sometimes occurs to me, and never more impressively than right now, that Thackeray must have had the gift of prescience and meant me when he wrote: 'There's Jack has made a wondrous marriage'?"

"Now you are laughing at me!" she pouted.

"Laughing at you! I'm laughing at the way you have outwitted old Bobs. But," his eyes seeking the clock again, "I must go downtown for a little while this evening. I've some business that must be attended to."

"You won't be long? I do wish you would quit allowing business to worry you in the evening."

"But this is imperative. I'll be back just as soon as it is over."

His imperative business this evening was to see Macollister and make a full confession of Mrs. Jack's sins in his behalf. He knew Macollister too well not to feel confident that, while he naturally would be vexed at the indiscretion of Florry's attempt to intercede in his interest, he would not misunderstand her good intention. At any rate, he owed it to Bobs to make a clean breast of it; and in making it he proposed to be no less loyal to his wife than to his friend.

It required but a few minutes to get through with it. Macollister took it very reasonably and very quietly. If he was vexed he repressed his vexation under the mask of mild and amused surprise with which he received Jack's story of Mrs. Jack's transgression and Jack's repentance. Macollister was fond of Mrs. Jack, and though he said but little his manner, more than his words, impressed Jack with the assurance that her interposition in Macollister's affairs was not to be misconstrued, to the modification of the friendship of the three. Jack, with a clear conscience in duty well performed, was at home again much earlier than Mrs. Jack had expected him.

Jack had hardly left Macollister before the latter put on his hat, to finish

his smoke out of doors. He wanted fresh air. He wanted a great deal of it. He took miles of it.

He finally brought up at the entrance of Cherokee Park. His one dominant wish during this walk was to see Delicia. All thought of Mrs. Jack Ormsby and what she had done was secondary to that. He longed to be with Delicia. What he should say to Delicia, what he should do, if he were with her, were questions to which he gave no rational consideration. His vague purpose was to ward off any reproach or humiliation which might threaten Delicia through Mrs. Jack's action. His conception of how he was to do this was vaguer than his purpose.

The park lay between him and Delicia. Not until he stopped at the entrance did he consciously realize that ever since putting on his hat he had been walking toward Delicia. But a continuation of his walk to the Hurds' was not to be thought of at this hour. He turned and retraced his steps, recalling with satisfaction that he had an appointment for a drive with Marion and Donald the next day. He would certainly see Delicia then.

## XVI

It was not more than three o'clock the following afternoon when Macollister arrived at the Hurds'. An unusually early start was to be made today, as the proposed route, out the River and the Sand Hill Roads, across to the creek, and along its picturesque banks to Black Bridge, was not less than forty miles, going and coming.

Marion and Donald were on the lookout for him.

"Where is Delicia?" he demanded, more sternly and authoritatively than Marion and Donald were accustomed to hear him speak.

His question was answered by the appearance of Delicia herself, who came from the house, with a cap for Donald and a light wrap for Marion.

Macollister studied her closely as she approached. Unquestionably, he decided, there was more color in her face than ordinarily. There seemed

to be a new air of constraint about her. Her eyes had acquired a new trick of avoiding his. The evidence was sufficient to satisfy Macollister that Mrs. Hurd had already spoken to Delicia of Mrs. Jack Ormsby's call.

But as she came up she gave him her customary greeting, which was simply a nod and the pronunciation of his name.

Macollister, however, did what he had never done before, stepping forward and extending his hand.

"How do you do, Delicia?" he said, also in a tone in which he had never said it before.

She allowed him to take her hand for a moment, showing, he did not fail to note, no indication of hesitancy or gaucherie. Mrs. Hurd, was Macollister's conclusion, had spoken to Delicia, but had not shaken her self-poise.

"Self-poise," he reflected as he opened the door of the tonneau for Delicia, was an extraordinary ascription to be applied to one in such a conjunction of circumstances as she now found herself, and the fact that it was applicable in this instance, was additional confirmation of Macollister's conviction that Delicia's origin was above her present employment. The fact that it was applicable, also gave him welcome assurance that whatever he might determine best to say or do in the new turn of their relations, would be considered by her in a sane, if not a reasonable, spirit.

Both Delicia and Macollister were unusually silent on the drive to Black Bridge. Beyond answering the questions of the children and occasionally commenting on the scenery, neither spoke. But when the Sand Hill Road was reached the scenery was new to all except Macollister and the comments multiplied, and when the creek was reached and the narrow road turned along its erratic course, Delicia began to catch some of the enthusiasm of Marion and Donald. The road wound between rugged acclivities and perpendicular cliffs on one hand and on the other the fern-fringed, thickly foliated chasm of the singing stream.

At the bridge Marion and Donald clamored to be permitted to get out and "go wading." Some distance further on the creek spreads out wide and shallow over a smooth bottom of rock and sand, shaded by sycamores and willows, and fortified on one side by a towering wall of many strata, rising, from luxuriant masses of exquisite ferns, through soft mosses and clinging vines, to a crest thickly crowned with laurel. On the other side the water thins itself over a bar of clean sand, and beyond that green turf runs back beneath a cluster of birches and poplars. Here Donald and Marion renewed their petitions, and Macollister stopped the car under the trees.

"It is a perfect place for wading," he admitted; adding, after a slight pause, "and I think we had better let them try it, hadn't we, Delicia?"

It had not been his habit thus to defer to Delicia. Usually he had directed rather than consulted her.

But Delicia was readily adaptive to his new mood, without apparent consciousness that it was a new mood.

"Oh, yes!" she responded, with something of the spirit of the children. "It would be cruel to refuse them."

The car was at once abandoned, and in a few minutes Marion and Donald, with bared feet and legs, were frolicking in the water.

Macollister and Delicia stood at the edge of the stream for a little, watching them and laughing with them in their exuberant merrymaking. Then Macollister turned to the green turf under the trees.

"Come, won't you?" he said, "and let's sit down. The children are safe; there is no deep water here."

She assented so willingly that Macollister, walking back by her side, reflected that while he was making this opportunity to talk to her about a disagreeable thing which must be talked over in some way, she too wished to talk about the same thing.

He brought a robe from the car and, folding it, placed it on the ground at the foot of one of the birches.

"There is a pretty fair seat for you,"

he said. "Or would you prefer to sit in the car?"

"No! no! indeed, no!" she cried. "And not on the seat you have made for me, either. But here, on the clean, sweet grass."

"I was stupidly selfish," he laughed. "I was going to take the grass, without stopping to think that you, too, might have a similar preference. No doubt you can understand the longing a fellow has sometimes just to get away from everything else and throw himself down on grass like this."

"And lie in it! and turn in it! and bury your face in it! Oh, I love the look of it, the smell of it, the feel of it!" running her fingers caressingly through the blades at her side.

"And even the taste of it," added Macollister, drawing a tender shoot from its sheath and placing it between his teeth.

"And this," he mused as he silently nibbled it, "is the girl whose presence in my car so shocks my friends!"

There was a pause of several seconds, during which Macollister was pondering what it was in his mind to say to Delicia and how he should best say it.

"What a treat you have given us today!" She spoke as she contemplated the view before and above her. "I did not know that there was anything so wild in this part of the country—anywhere nearer than the mountains."

"You have not lived long in this part of the country. But to think, that ninety-nine of every hundred people who have always lived in our city have never seen this, or are ignorant of its existence. More of them have seen Europe than have seen this."

Silence followed again, until broken by Macollister.

"Look at the butterflies," he said. "Did you ever see more of them or more gente?"

"Or more beautiful. But they were not so gentle a few minutes ago. When you and I went down to the creek they flew timidly away; but now that they have only Marion and Donald to fear they have returned and are settling and floating all around them. See, there



is one that seems about to alight in Marion's hair."

"Yes," Macollister answered, "they do not appear to be afraid of Marion and Donald. Perhaps the butterflies recognize Marion and Donald as more of their own world. Once Marion stumped me by asking how old a little girl was who was six years old. I shouldn't wonder if the butterflies could come nearer giving her an answer. No; we poor grown-ups are not of their world—the children's and the butterflies'."

"The children's and the butterflies'," echoed Delicia, the pretty picture they made holding her dreamy gaze; "isn't it—isn't it pathetic?"

Macollister made no reply. He was looking at another picture—that of Delicia, her eyes brooding with misty tenderness, her face softened and saddened by some flooding undercurrent of feeling.

Presently she turned to him, but quickly turned away again, a little tremulously, before the intensity of his gaze.

"Mr. Macollister—" she began, but got no farther, studying her fingers as she slowly thridded them through the grass.

Macollister watched her a few seconds longer before he spoke.

"Delicia," he finally said, "I want to talk to you a little; and I have brought you here that I might have an opportunity."

"I'm glad you made the opportunity," she replied, with a flickering smile but without looking up; "for I want to talk to you a little, too."

"I wonder if it can be about the same thing?"

"I wonder?"

"I am afraid it is. I wanted to talk to you about a certain call that Mrs. Jack Ormsby paid to Mrs. Hurd."

"And I wanted to talk to you about that, and—and—something more."

"I—hardly know what to say about it. Mrs. Ormsby is a good friend of mine; the wife of my best friend. She took that step entirely on her own responsibility; she meant well; but I

wouldn't have had her do it even if it had been necessary to save me every friend I have. I was dumfounded when I heard of it last night, and I—was cut to the heart. I do not know what Mrs. Hurd may have said to you, to mortify and wound you. She may not understand how I, alone, am chargeable with—whatever has caused Mrs. Jack Ormsby's perturbation; that I have insisted, demanded that you accompany us in our drives. If she does not understand this I must see her and make her understand it. But what I wanted most to say to you is, that you must not let this make any difference with you; you must ignore this miserable mistake of Mrs. Ormsby's, and go on, as you have been doing, just as if it had never occurred. If you do not, you can have no idea how much you will wrong me, how much you will hurt me. But you must pay no attention to anything Mrs. Ormsby has done or said. I—simply won't stand it. I am determined to make it clear both to you and Mrs. Hurd, if it is not already clear to you, that the only thing to do, in common sense, in fairness, in justice, is to do precisely as we have been doing."

It was Delicia's gaze that was now fixed on him, and there was something in it so sweet and kind, and something so much more than sweetness and kindness, that his pulse quickened.

When she spoke it was in a voice, low-pitched as it was, whose fullness and mellowness charged her words with an exquisite distinctness and simple sincerity. "Oh, Mr. Macollister," she said, "you are good, indeed; but—you do not know how undeserving of such consideration I am."

"I know that you are deserving of the consideration that any woman is, Delicia," he answered, with an emphasis of finality.

"You do not know who I am," she continued.

"No; I do not know who you are," he smiled.

"You think I am——?"

The words were interrogative, and she awaited his reply.



"I hardly know what to say. Perhaps it is more an impression than a definite thought, that you are some large-hearted young woman, possibly a relative of Mrs. Hurd's, with a tendency to independence and maybe a touch of eccentricity, who lives the life she does for the love of it—which is difficult to understand—and especially for the love of Marion and Donald—which is much easier to understand."

"But that would be a mistaken impression. I am not such a young woman."

"Well, that is not my only impression of you that was mistaken. You, remember, when I first met you, I had an impression for about five minutes that you were Marion and Donald's maid—only that and nothing more," smiling.

"Not longer than five minutes?" with an answering smile.

"Hardly longer than that moment when I first called you Delicia."

"Oh!" with a little start, as if flinching from an imaginary or remembered blow. "I recollect it!" softly laughing, "and how it took my breath away."

"And it was because it seemed to take your breath away, or something like it, that I began to doubt that you were in a position, precisely, where I might be expected to call you Delicia. And the more I saw of you afterward, the more I doubted it; though you acquiesced in the liberty I took with your name, and after the first time did not appear to notice it."

"The first time you did it I was so surprised that I did not set you right at once; and then it struck me as so comical that, just for pure mischief, I suppose, it occurred to me not to set you right at all, but to wait and see how long it would take you to correct your own mistake."

"Well, as I have said, it did not take me long to suspect, and even conclude, that I had made some sort of mistake; but whatever it was, I did not care to correct it. Whoever you might be, I had fallen into the habit of calling you Delicia and treating you as if you were Delicia; and it was a very pleasant

habit, which I did not care to give up."

"Later, as time passed and you did not seem to discover your error, my conscience began to hurt me, and I have been intending recently to tell you who I am; though it does seem so ridiculous that you have not found out. I wished to tell you that day on Iroquois, but my courage failed."

"Courage," Macollister laughed. "You talk as if you were about to confess that you are a veritable monster. Really, I'd much prefer you wouldn't tell me anything if it is likely to interfere with that habit of mine which I have just mentioned, and which I find highly conducive, I am beginning to fear essential, to my comfort and happiness."

"I am"—her eyes again dropped to the grass with which she was toying—"not a relative of Mrs. Hurd's."

"No matter."

"I am—Mrs. Hurd."

Macollister did not speak for several seconds; so many that Mrs. Hurd raised her eyes to his face in a glance of curiosity and doubt. But it might as well have been masked, so impassive was it. His only sign that he had heard and understood her was the sudden suspension of his idle stripping of the bark from a twig, which he continued to contemplate mutely in his motionless fingers.

Then, meeting and holding Mrs. Hurd's troubled, dubious glance, he questioned:

"Not Marion and Donald's——"

"Yes; Marion and Donald's mother," she answered gently.

There was another silence before he spoke again.

"I didn't know who you were," he said, with a slowness that was somewhat halting; "but I don't think I should have been much surprised at anything you could have told me, except this."

He waited a little, as if for some explanation, and then added:

"But I do not comprehend. Marion and Donald call you Delicia."

"Usually, though not always," she

replied. "Once Marion called me mother in your presence, and I thought surely the little comedy was over."

"I never noticed it. When was it?"

"On my first drive with you. The car had stopped, and you had got out and were trying to find out what was the matter."

"Yes—Donald and I," he smiled. "I was so anxious that the car and I should make a good impression on you that day that I can easily account for my failure to take note of other things. But how odd that Donald and Marion should call you Delicia."

"It was a conceit of my father's. My own name is Marion, too. Delicia is not my name at all. It was a 'pet name' which my father gave me when a child, and when there was another Marion she was Marion to him and I was still Delicia. The children began to imitate him sometimes in using the name when speaking of me to him, and he was so delighted with it that he encouraged them to use it when speaking to me also. He thought it helped to make and keep us all children together. He liked that idea, for I was always a child to him. And I did not dislike it. Somehow it seemed to bring me nearer to them, in—in that world," turning her eyes to the brook, "which we were speaking of a little while ago."

"The world of the children and the butterflies?" he asked, with a new gentleness.

She nodded affirmatively.

"It is so hard," she said, "that we must slip away from it; that we must be barred out of it."

His eyes followed hers and rested on the idyl of the brook.

"I like your father's idea, too," was his simple comment on her story.

For a long time they said nothing

more, but sat and looked at the picture before them—the sloping turf; the clean sand; against the towering background of green-draped rock, the clear water, flecked by sun and shade; Marion and Donald idling happily in its shallows, and the many-hued butterflies drifting and weaving over them and between them.

Then Macollister turned from that picture to the other by his side.

When a little later he spoke it was to say:

"But your story leaves me out of not only that world, but the only world I have found worth living in."

He paused for any response she might make; but there was none.

"What am I to call you—now?" he asked.

She turned to him for an instant with a fitting, silent smile.

"I refuse to call you Mrs. Hurd. You are not Mrs. Hurd to me. You are not—you can never be—anybody to me except Delicia. And yet," making a palpable effort to relax the increasing tenseness of his voice, "you would, with a word, annihilate Delicia. You would tell me that there is no such person, except in Donald and Marion's world. You would remove her from my world, and leave a void of nothingness. I won't submit to it. Delicia has grown to be necessary to me. She is everything to me. She exists only for those who love her best, and whom she loves best. I want her to exist for me. I—shall never call you anything unless I may call you Delicia."

He did not have to wait for an answer now. For if he was not answered by the rose of her radiant face and the mists of her radiant eyes, he could not have been better answered by her tremulous words:

"I love—for you to call me Delicia."



# THE WOMAN IN GRAY

By Ethel Watts Mumford

**I**N all London one finds no gathering place of all nations to match the square salon precedent to the low-ceiling dining-room and tiled terrace of the Savoy. The waiting hall, raised several feet above the level of the lower rooms, gives exceptional opportunities for observation, of which Bradford Venner was availing himself.

One woman only, of all the butterfly throng, attracted his attention. "Queer type," he thought. "Wonder what she is besides anæmic. What color!—arsenic tablets, I suppose. What won't women do!"

His glance wandered to a vision in rose and gold, and thence to a dowager in black velvet. Both were banal. A lady, accompanied by an adoring staff of men, caught his eye. He noted her elaborate coiffure, strident laugh and high color, and his interest reverted to the lonely, pale woman. He found his gaze returned by two mysterious dark eyes, deep sunken under straight brows. Tender and thoughtful they might once have been; now they were filled with self-searching and resentful wonder. So absorbed was Bradford in his effort to analyze the strange expression, that he forgot the persistence of his stare, until, with a twitch of the gray-spangled skirts and a pressure of the gray-gloved hand upon the arm of her chair, the stranger half rose, in her face the light of struggling recognition.

Bradford started and turned away. He did not know her, of that he was certain. And he had no desire to scrape a hotel acquaintance—and yet—she was a lady; that was evident. She must have mistaken him for someone else—Clint, perhaps, his twin brother; people

were always making mistakes. He thrust his hands deep into his pockets with a nervous movement. It was a bore, that extraordinary resemblance; one never knew—Why on earth should he want to look at that creature again? And why was Roberts so late? But look he must.

She had collapsed upon the seat once more, with the relaxation of infinite weariness, while she slowly folded and unfolded a feather fan—marabout, soft as a puff of smoke. She was looking in his direction, but through him, past him, with tired watchfulness, intent upon the distant entrance. Every other personality in the room faded and vanished. It was as if he looked into an empty banquet hall, wherein this woman sat solitary. He noted the heavy coils of her blue-black glossy hair—too heavy a load for her slender white throat. It seemed to pull her head backward, giving it a haughty pose that the anguished eyes belied. Her nose was fine, her mouth beautifully modeled but curled half in pain, half disgust, as if some bitter draught were proffered. Her low-cut gown of cloudy tone was spangled and embroidered lavishly, yet it did not glitter nor contrast sharply. She wore no jewels save a pearl collar, from which depended three gray pearls.

Bradford shook himself angrily, turned on his heel, walked down the wide corridor and, through the glass partition by the writing-desk, glanced in upon the busy diners in the outdoor "French" café. Roberts was not to be found. He looked at his watch—nine o'clock! Whatever could be the matter?

He turned again restlessly, and re-

traced his steps. He re-crossed the waiting-room and stopped short. The woman in gray had risen and was walking toward the low stair. Her movements were hurried, her face "all stretched to speak." With a swift, graceful sweep she raised her spangled skirts as she mounted, showing a tiny, steel-beaded slipper. Another instant, and she was close beside him. He heard a gentle, silken swish, the faint "click" of metal paillettes, noticed a subtle perfume as of sandalwood and violet, and heard a troubled, low whisper, "I must explain, I must explain!" Like a cloud she drifted by him, and with vague trouble of spirit he watched her slender form trailing its wake of glinting draperies. She hurried on, turned to the right as she neared the entrance, and disappeared from his view.

"Oh, Venner," exclaimed Roberts at his elbow, "I'm awfully sorry to have kept you waiting like this. Couldn't help it, you know. I've just sold Hodges my motor car, and I wanted to settle the deal. Come on, let's feed."

Venner hardly appeared to listen. "You know everybody in London," he said abruptly. "Who was that woman in gray, who came from below there, just as you spoke to me?"

"Woman in gray? Didn't notice. Couldn't have been anybody. Savoy full of strangers, anyhow. Come on, let's get outside. I'll tell Gustav to give us ducks."

They settled themselves at one of the little tables set under the glass-domed entrance to the right of the door.

"Where's Clint these days?" inquired the host, when, the order given, he lit a cigarette and settled back in his chair.

Venner laughed. "I haven't the least idea. Nice for twins who are supposed to be so inseparable, and all that, isn't it? But Clint is such an Arab, and I'm such an Indian—and there you are."

"Haven't seen him in two years," observed Roberts.

"No more have I. Last letter I had was from Paris about a month ago. I was thinking that when twins were so

near each other, they ought to make an effort to exchange the time of day"—Venner sipped his soup—"even if we haven't a taste in common."

"Taste in common!" exclaimed Roberts. "It's just because you're so blamed alike, that you can't get on better, and each one of you thinks the other an extremist. You're twins, mentally and morally and physically."

Venner shrugged.

"Not morally, you mean," interpreted Roberts tactlessly.

Bradford drew away. "No," he said coldly. "I did not mean that; my brother's private affairs are his own and, I have no doubt, bear the lime-light as well as those of other men—when he chooses to court publicity."

Roberts laughed, his coarse-fibered nature quite unaware of the boorishness of his remarks, or the evident annoyance of his companion. "Oh, you know what I mean," he insisted. "Nothing against him, but men generally don't class him up with you. He may take with the women, Lord bless 'em! but he's driven a bit too carelessly, and that last mess, you know——"

"No, I don't know," Bradford retorted—"and if you don't mind, let's talk over our business, and drop Clint."

"Oh, very well," said the host. "Here, pour that champagne, waiter—didn't know you affected the 'brotherly love' pose. Sorry—but we all know, you know—so there's no harm done. By the way, about that company of yours—just how much stock has been taken up?"

Venner's frown vanished, and he was soon absorbed in the details of his new scheme. It was not until the "pêche melba," the inevitable London sweet, had made its appearance that his mind had time to revert to Roberts's earlier remarks, but by the time coffee was served his shrewd brain had recovered the thread of those insinuations, and was busily following where they led.

"That last mess"—what was meant by that? he wondered. He would not deign to touch the subject again with Roberts, or, indeed, with anyone. His loyalty was too deep for that. Un-

easiness entered his spirit. Evidently this man, and the world at large, were in possession of facts or stories concerning his brother's recent life of which he was totally ignorant. And Clint, after all, had a way of being guilty—not of anything criminal, nor even beyond the pale, but guilty, nevertheless, of things better left undone or unsaid—things that earned a shrug or a sneer from those who looked on. Bradford was as reticent as he was sympathetic and broadminded, but the sun of his solar system was pride of race, and that had more than once been sorely wounded by his twin's recklessness, the likeness between the brothers only adding to the difficulties.

Dinner was over only a few moments before the supper throng arrived. Venner excused himself on the plea of an engagement, drew back his chair, took his hat and coat from the attendant, and prepared to slip between the floral barriers. As he did so he caught sight of the gray woman coming rapidly down the main corridor. Involuntarily he paused. Her actions were, as before, hurried and anxious. Her expression of dreary unhappiness hurt him. Her lips moved. He knew what she was saying, although no sound could have reached him where he stood—"I must explain, I must explain!"

She came close to the wide entrance. Venner could see the shine of the intense electric light on her eyes, its vivid flash on her metal spangles, its sparkle on the diamond bars of her jeweled collar. Yet her beautifully gowned, graceful figure and splendid head with its mass of elaborately dressed hair seemed somehow antique, like a Greek mask of grief. Its extreme modern note was lost in the intensity of its human passion. She turned suddenly, with a very slight gesture that, nevertheless, showed her evident despair. A moment later she was gone.

With a strange sensation of wonder and sympathy Venner roused himself, ordered a cab, and was driven rapidly through the bustle and hurry of supper hour, to the Carlton. He had no engagement, but hoped to meet a friend

or two, and idle away an hour in pleasant gossip. Roberts's personality was still on his nerves, and he longed to erase it by some pleasanter contact. But fate seemed against him. The place was thronged, but the clientele was unusually uninteresting—an overdressed Russian woman, smoking defiantly in the faces of two over-décolleté dowagers, seemed the only woman present who was not an importation from Mme. Tousaud's. A hideous nightmare feeling settled upon him. They were all mechanical figures, these people, moving by cunningly devised springs—awkward, unnatural, uncanny.

He turned away, when a familiar laugh and a light touch brought him to a standstill.

"Are you going to cut me?" demanded a warm and friendly voice.

"Cut you—never!" His greeting was boyishly cordial. "Of all the women in the world, you are the one I most needed. Can you give me a moment, an hour, a year or two?—anything you will."

She nodded. "Yes, boy, it just happens you may have the hour. I was on my way to my rooms when I caught a glimpse of you, and started in pursuit. Let us sit here; we can watch the Zoo, without feeling as if we made a part of it. What has come over our old London, I wonder. Did you ever see such queer people?" Mrs. Carghatesmoothed a straying lock at her temple, and settled deep into a chair; a strong personality enshrined in a vigorous, middle-aged body, that neither defied nor sought to disguise the finger of Time, but fused his work into harmony with her own dauntless spirit. She smiled divinely upon Venner. "Tell me all about yourself—and there must be quite an accumulation; I haven't seen you—in—let me see—ten months, at least."

"Whose fault?" he asked ruefully.

"Mine and yours. I'm such an old gad-about—and so are you. It's been Cairo and Nice and Paris, then Paris and Aix and Chamounix and Paris—and some more Paris. But that is neither



here nor there; or, rather, it is here and there and everywhere. Tell me about yourself."

"Well, I've been floating a lot of schemes, and incidentally, it's been tigers and an elephant or so, and a few lions and some more tigers, some zebras and leopards, and back to tiger; a rhino, a hippo, then up to tiger again. You have re-occurring Paris, and I have re-occurring tigers and schemes."

She nodded approval. "That shows how alike we are in our tastes. Paris is the schemer and the tiger among cities—the most beautiful and dangerous, the gaudiest and most velvety. Well, and the heart, boy?"

"Did Paris get yours? No more did the tigers get mine—and I'm afraid I'm not a ladies' man. I leave all that to my brother." His companion's brows contracted suddenly; a swift compression of the lips spoke volumes. Venner laid his hand an instant over hers.

"Please, will you tell me what the trouble is? What has my brother done? I meet insinuations and shrugs—it's—it's difficult for me to ask, you understand; but I must know, and better than anyone else you can tell me—won't you?"

She looked at him incredulously. "Haven't you seen him in this last year?"

"No; I've been away—East Africa."

"And you've not been told?"

"No."

She was silent a moment. "It's not a pleasant task you give me, boy."

"I know," he answered.

"I wonder what makes it," she mused. "Here you are, twins—like as two beads on a string, yet you are my dear, good Brad, and he is Clint—whom nobody quite forgives for living—" She paused again, and twined her slender fingers in the diamond flexibility of her lorgnette chain. "You will have to hear it, I suppose, sooner or later," she began. "You remember your brother was devoted to Countess Kesorleff for some years. There—was—a great deal of talk——"

Bradford flushed. "Yes, I heard

something of it. I even thought Clint would marry her after her husband died."

"We all thought that." There was a moment's pause ere she took up the thread of her narrative. "Poor woman!" she murmured, "poor woman!"

"She was terribly in love with Clint, and had never been at pains to conceal it. It was her whole life, her whole being. She was one of those women in whom love kills every other passion, every other thought."

"It may be that very intensity wearied your brother. Anyhow, after devoting himself to her for years, till she was merely tolerated in the circles where she used to queen it over all, after compromising her in every way in the world——"

"I don't believe there was a thing in it," Venner interrupted. "It was his vanity—I know him."

"There was this in it: She adored the ground he walked on; she lived only in what she thought was his devotion, and then, when her husband died and she was free—he left her. He wanted the questionable notoriety of being the beautiful countess's adorer, but he didn't want to be saddled with a wife."

"I see," said Bradford.

"She couldn't comprehend what you 'see' so easily. It simply wouldn't take root in her consciousness. She didn't understand. Where pride would have protected another woman, it offered her no refuge. If one loves enough, one has no pride—do you know that, boy?—Not yet, I think; but I know, and it's a terrible lesson to learn. Well, the world looked on and wondered how it would end. And Clint did what many a man has done before—forced a misunderstanding, trumped up a quarrel, and then—wouldn't forgive her—wouldn't hear a word she had to say; accused her of disloyalty and treachery, washed his hands of her and her love—and still she could not understand. She strove in every way to bridge the gap. He wouldn't see her, her letters were returned unopened. Knowing herself innocent she fought desperately, always believing in his

sincerity, always believing that in truth he was misinformed, or mistaken about her. And it was such a transparent game he played. They found his letters—it was such a miserable, tragic farce, any child could have read between the lines. But she was in love—that was all. At last, heart-broken and hopeless, she wrote 'Finis' to the story—wrote it in blood!—poor, troubled soul, shot herself in her rooms at the Savoy!"

Mrs. Carghate ceased speaking, and Venner remained silent.

"It was just what we might have known from the first," mused Mrs. Carghate. "If we hadn't been trussed and skewered with our own conventions. It was written all over her—for all her Parisian gowns and modern manner—she was a true, primitive woman. Hers was a sort of desperate, tragic beauty, even in her most radiant moments, and it was the intensity and simpleness of her emotions that made them electrical. You could always feel her presence in a room. She seemed to wipe out the personality of every other woman, though she dressed very unobtrusively; indeed, always affected a sort of very light half-mourning—even after her husband died. She wasn't at all sorry, and didn't intend to lie about it even in gowns. She was elemental—even her name told it—Eve. But, there, boy, don't take it to heart. It's no fault of yours, and we know so little of causes, perhaps we may be unjust to Clinton. Anyway, the play is over, the curtain rung down, the audience dispersed, the actors gone——"

She broke off, her expressive face suddenly transfixed in astonishment. Venner followed the direction of her gaze, and his own face underwent a marked change. Incredulous anger glowed at his heart.

"Good heavens!" he exclaimed. "It's Clint! He dares show himself in London—now!"

Mrs. Carghate rose. "Don't provoke a scene, Brad," she interposed hastily in a cool, poised voice, that instantly steadied him. "There's no

use attracting public attention, you know."

Venner smiled composedly. "You are quite right. But I must see him. Either he or I will leave London at once. The situation is intolerable. You will excuse me—I must speak with him—now."

"Good night," she said, extending her hand, "good night; telephone me in the morning, will you? It's all quite too bad; but don't be hasty—never mind me," she added, as he rose to conduct her to the elevators. "He is leaving. If you want to see him—hurry."

She turned from him quickly, releasing him from the duties of courtesy.

When Bradford reached the entrance he was only in time to hear the order, "To the Savoy!" The words staggered him. Would Clinton show himself there after all that had happened? What depths of callousness must cover his brother's soul! "To the Savoy!" hastily securing his coat and hat, he called a hansom, to follow his brother's lead as rapidly as possible. All the way his anger rose. How dare a man face all London on the very scene of the pitiful tragedy he had impelled! Could he bring himself face to face with such memories? It was beyond belief.

As he turned at the Savoy, the other hansom preceded him only by a few yards. He did not wait for his own vehicle to stop. Thrusting the fare to the cabby, he leaped to the pavement and ran forward. His brother should not, must not, have time to alight—they would drive on together and have it out between them.

The first carriage drew up before the door, the starter moved forward to assist, when through the wide doors came the woman in gray—so swiftly, so silently, she scarcely seemed to touch the ground. Her eyes shone joyously, her lips were apart, as if her haste of soul, too great for the utmost speed of her body, must instantly voice itself.

Brad gasped. Again her presence forced itself upon him with marvelous distinctness. He caught the light of

her eyes, the glitter of her spangles, the sparkle of her collar, as so many vivid high lights in the picture.

Another instant and she had passed the flunky. One gray-gloved hand caught the hansom rail, a slim, steel-beaded slipper flashed upon the step, and she had entered the hansom with his brother. What could it mean?

Breathless, Venner ran forward. The servant was bending toward the interior of the cab. "Savoy, sir," Bradford heard the man repeat twice.

"Here!" he cried impatiently. "That's my brother—I wish to speak with him."

The man stepped back. "Yes, sir—I'm afraid, sir—gentleman's drunk, sir——"

"Drunk!" Bradford thrust the starter aside. Collapsed in the corner of the hansom, sprawled Clinton. He

was alone. Bradford sprang beside his brother, endeavoring to lift him to a sitting posture. The body rolled and slipped from him—it was limp and warm, but the light striking full on his face, revealed death.

"Good God!" he exclaimed. "Good God! Here—help!" He turned to the startled attendant. "Where is the woman in gray—where did she go? This may be murder!"

"'Eavens!" exclaimed the man, "murder!—there waren't no woman in gray—'e was alone in the 'ansom."

"Why she jumped in here beside him—you must have seen—cabby, you must have seen her come!"

"No, sir; it's the shock, sir. Now, don't take on—there's been no woman in gray 'ereabouts, and my fare I picks up alone at the Carlton. There's been no woman hat hall, sir, hanyw'ares."



## AT THE GATES OF SPRING

WITH April here,  
And first thin green on the awakening bough,  
What wonderful things and dear,  
My tired heart to cheer,  
At last appear!  
Colors of dream afloat on cloud and tree,  
So far, so clear,  
A spell, a mystery;  
And joys that thrill and sing,  
New come on mating wing,  
The wistfulness and ardor of the Spring—  
And Thou!

CHARLES G. D. ROBERTS.



## MODERN

THE VISITOR—Well, Willie, why aren't you playing with your toys?  
WILLIE (*sadly*)—I don't have to—they all play themselves.

# THE WAY OF A MAID

By John Whittlesey Knapp

IT was at the breakfast-table. Aunt Eleanor was nibbling her toast in that mouse-like way she has, and the governor was sipping his coffee and reading the morning murders, when Wilkins brought in the mail. Wilkins has been with us since I was in knee trousers, and I tremble to think what might befall the house of Carewe in case he left us. I am convinced it would disintegrate like a crumbling tooth. When he stands behind Aunt Eleanor's chair he looks like a huge, black marble monolith beautifully polished.

There were a number of letters which the governor glanced over and threw aside. Then he picked up a rather thick, bluish envelope and tore it open. If there really *were* such things as premonitions undoubtedly we would all have felt a chill flesh-creep of impending misfortune as the governor tore open that letter.

But as no one in this age of the world believes in anything so interesting as a premonition, Aunt Eleanor went on in emotionless nibbling of her toast and I clipped the top of an egg with practised dexterity.

I first became conscious of something electrical in the atmosphere when I glanced up and saw the governor's nostrils working like a blue-ribbon colt's on the home stretch. His face, which inclines to florid at all times, had taken on the color of a forest fire at sunset, done in carmine and rose madder.

"What is it, Lemuel?" demanded Aunt Eleanor, dropping her toast and looking like a frightened canary.

Visions of falling stocks and divers calamities chased each other skittishly

through my fancy. Yet the governor isn't a man to look like that over any sort of combination of disastrous doings. He drew in a sharp breath like a man who has been hit with a bullet. Then he gathered up the rest of his mail, thrust it into his coat pocket, and pushed back from the table.

"Read that," he said simply, handing the bluish-looking envelope to Aunt Eleanor; and walked from the room looking in a blue funk and with an expression glummer than I have ever seen him wear even when puzzling out his decision in an important lawsuit.

Aunt Eleanor's face as she read the letter was not a prairie-fire-sunset effect, but a study in delicate, porcelain pinks, flushing into rose—a faint "ladylike" rose. Everything about Aunt Eleanor was "ladylike" (the expression is her own). She is a survival. Antebellum glory still radiates from her like perfume from a faded rose. She is like the frontispiece in one of those quaint, sweet old volumes of "The Nosegay" still to be found on dusty bookshelves in the Old South. At a time when girls were not commonly taken abroad, she had not only been educated there, but received into the society of foreign cities as the daughter of an American envoy. The halo of having once danced with a certain potentate still clings about her like the odor of lavender about her old-fashioned belongings. She would speak several languages except that the range of her ideas is too circumscribed. And she wants her intellectual food chopped very fine—predigested, as it were. When anything occurs which has not occurred



daily since the memory of man, she always exclaims: "What is the world coming to!" She has four little Assyrian curls at each side of the part in her pretty gray hair, and always wears a small, black-lace cap, which she fondly believes covers the bald spot on the top of her head and which no one has ever yet had the hardihood to tell her does *not*.

Exactly, to the moment, when the hands point to the fateful hour every afternoon, she has her five-o'clock tea. Principalities may fall and empires crumble away, but Aunt Eleanor's tea is served promptly at five o'clock. If she were on a sinking ship I have not the shadow of a doubt that she would calmly grasp her tea-caddy, her alcohol-burner, and a large, corpulent bottle of alcohol, and thus comfortably equipped, prepare to meet her Maker.

If I am fortunate enough to meet Aunt Eleanor in heaven (and this happy event depends entirely upon *my* getting there) I confidently expect to find her dispensing Oolong in a "lady-like" manner to groups of smiling angels who lay down their harps to partake of it.

She keeps religiously to all of her old-timey ways, such as having Wilkins bring in the hot water while she washes out the silver at the table, and of using sugar-scissors to cut the loaf sugar; and plate-warmers that are as out of date as hoopskirts; and of making twisted paper lamp-lighters.

"Dear me, Robert," she gasped faintly, the pink flush deepening with excitement, "this is very disconcerting. It is, to say the least, upsetting. What is the world coming to!"

I was prepared for all sorts of calamities happening except the particular event foretold in this letter.

It was from a man out West. In it he stated that one James Emery Steele, recently deceased, an officer at a certain military post, whose solicitor he was, had, in dying, bequeathed his all to his only surviving daughter, Isadore, and with it his dying request that she make her future home with his one-time friend, Judge Lemuel Carewe. He, in point of fact, appointed the said

Judge Lemuel Carewe her guardian. It went on to state further some facts connected with the settling up of the estate, and added that Judge Carewe's ward would leave that day and would probably reach Washington about the twenty-second. A telegram would further notify him as to the exact train on which she might be expected. And he signed himself, "Very sincerely yours, William Atterbury."

I remember that the very first exclamatory gulp I gave as I looked up and met Aunt Eleanor's pale, wan smile was:

"Isadore! Great Scott, it sounds like a sleeping-car!"

"She is Fanny Kemper's daughter," volunteered Aunt Eleanor plaintively. "Her mother was a famous beauty and an equally famous coquette."

In some way I gathered from Aunt Eleanor's voice that she felt the daughter was in a manner to blame for this.

Far back in some disused cranny of my memory I recalled a vague, shadowy romance I had somewhere heard, of Fanny Kemper's being the governor's first love; and that their little romance had ended in a lover's tiff.

"Of course she will be a savage—coming from way out there at the jumping-off place," I glowered darkly, "and will chew gum, and pick out tunes with one finger on the piano, and be slangy—and use Jockey Club cologne. It goes without saying she will be altogether impossible! Or, heaven save the mark, she may even be strong-minded!"

"She couldn't be," broke in Aunt Eleanor breathlessly, "and be a daughter of Fanny Kemper. Why, Fanny never liked to even open her own umbrella! And as to picking up a fan, or a handkerchief—oh, she *couldn't* be strong-minded, Robert, she just couldn't, and be a daughter of Fanny's!"

"I'm glad you have such faith in heredity; I haven't." And I marched out of the breakfast-room feeling as savage as the governor had looked, and nearly upsetting Wilkins with a tray and glasses, whom I cannoned into at the door.

And such a complacent, blithely unconcerned letter, too, as it was! Just as if he had been saying: "My name is Norval; on the Grampian hills," instead of: "I am shipping you by this train one wild-and-woolly Westerner, warranted genuine; bristling with odious colloquialisms; full of the real spirit and 'go' of the unbroken broncho; the breath of the breezy plains; and saturated with Jockey Club cologne." Of course she will say: "Savez?" and wear stage-coachy things, as they always do in the melodramas. I wouldn't wonder if she would even announce: "It looks as if we're stacking up for a nor'easter" when the clouds roll by.

And just as I had planned to be off golfing I will have to be dragging about watching them stamp bank-notes at the Bureau, or gazing wan and weary at the macerator in the Treasury. Tramping hot, endless asphalt, and climbing dusty, unending stairs, to look at places one is supposed to know about and doesn't, and don't give a hang for anyway.

The early May evenings are pink and fragrant out here at the old house where the city has not reached its long arms, and the woods are about us. The hepatica is purple as Winter sunsets, and the rose hedges are just coming out. All my plans for tramping about the hills in the long, golden twilight with my pipe between my teeth and old Nip at my heels have gone up like smoke.

Instead, I shall have to be doing the Capitol and Mount Vernon, and all the blooming, stupid round, and inwardly chewing up whole vocabularies of seething profanity. And longing for a file on which to whet my teeth.

The message came that evening, saying in terse, telegraphic terms that the Western Horror (although it wasn't put in exactly those terms) would be in on the 3:30 the following afternoon.

When Wilkins brought the carriage round preparatory to meeting the said W. H. at the station, Aunt Eleanor pleaded "megrimme" (which is last century or the century before for head-

ache) and really *did* look awfully keyed up with pale, anticipatory dread. I was convinced that Aunt Eleanor's chief haunting fear was that the girl had been brought up on whisky-and-sodas in place of tea.

As for me, I had promised Ted Van Bergen a tennis bout at four o'clock. Wilkins drove to the station in stately isolation.

When the time came, Van Bergen—who is a quitter anyway—backed down on the tennis because he said it was too hot; and I tramped off with Nip at my heels and the golf links vaguely in mind.

But half a mile from our own boundary—which is extensive, thanks to the governor's proclivity for hanging onto things with a bit of family history behind them—I came out upon the bit of woods which I had always fancifully termed in my own mind the Forest of Arden. The trees are giants of their kind, and one doesn't need a three-ply imagination to fancy some of those fire-eating, filibustering old colonists with gold buckles on their shoes and their fingers eternally either on their snuff-boxes or on their sword-hilts, meeting out here to cross swords just to vindicate the honor of a gentleman and lend a touch of poetic color to a sylvan scene.

I had been tramping in reminiscent delight through this bit of wood for upward of an hour, when I stopped to rest awhile on a fallen log and light a contemplative pipe. Suddenly Nip, who is a bull-terrier of exceedingly irascible proclivities, bristled up like a pin-cushion.

He emitted a subterranean growl and was off with his blunt nose at an angle which always means look out for flying fur. I threw down my lighted match and looked up to see coming toward me under the arch of the big trees a girl with a mass of reddish hair tousled under a picturesque little hat with a quill through it.

She was accompanied by a Great Dane, which strode along beside her with the dignity of a trust magnate out for an airing. She carried a stout dog-

whip in one hand, and had she been in classic drapery in place of a very chic walking-suit, she might have posed as the spirit of the wood, or something equally allegorical or mythological.

I saw at once that it was the Great Dane which was the *casus belli*, and that it was for him Nip was making, tooth and nail. The whole thing was as quick as a flash. The two came together before you could say Jack Robinson. And in less time than it takes to tell it there was simply a whirling aurora borealis of white bull-terrier and brown dog, surrounded by a dizzy halo, as it were, of flying hair and snarling yelps.

Sometimes you would have said the white was up, but before you could have batted an eye it was the brown. It was just like *rouge et noir*. It would have reached the deadly-lock stage in just about one minute and a half when nothing short of red-hot pokers—which are not indigenous to the Forest of Arden—could have forced Nip free of his judgment-day grip, but that I made for a thorn stick which kindly Providence had evidently placed there, or the keeper of this particular neck o' the woods had fortunately neglected to pick up. I began a strenuous application of this with a vigor that would have assured me a niche in the Temple of Fame had I lived in the day of our birch-wielding ancestors.

The girl made one bound forward with a grace and speed indescribable, and used the heavy end of her loaded whip with a dexterity that left nothing to be desired. She caught the Great Dane's collar and literally dragged him back with the whole force and strength of her vigorous young body. At that I got Nip by the collar and we had a little heart-to-heart interview of our own, in spite of his burning ambition to get back at the Great Dane; in which I discovered that the one ragged tip he had heretofore proudly sported as an ear was gone.

The girl had taken less time than I to get the master hand of her big protector, and when I finally had Nip cowed into cringing subjection I looked

up and met her laughing eyes. I have always regarded the combination of red hair and black, velvety eyes as one calculated to inspire caution in the mind of any thinking man. The red naturally betokens ignition. The black suggests combustible material and explosive possibilities. The inference is easy.

Yet here was I facing this combination and conscious of but one thought; that I had never before seen a pair of eyes that appeared to say so many different things at the same time—shy and mysterious, yet candid and mirthful. And the way the sunlight ran its fingers through her mass of reddish hair would have made an incipient Rubens long for his brushes and paint-pots. There were little damp rings of it curling about her temples; the day was sultry, and the late unpleasantness with the lively action it had necessitated had been somewhat spirited, and we were both rather out of breath, and flushed, and tingling with the moment's excitement.

"I never knew Sir Launcelot to be so unreasonable," she apologized in breathless contralto. "The poor fellow has been cooped up so long he is simply unmanageable. I am afraid he has been ungracious enough to rob your poor terrier of the very last ear he had—and he must have been so *attached* to it, too."

I grinned over the *double entendre*, and Nip emitted a whine of baffled rage. It was a lesson in profanity to hear his remarks to that Great Dane. The girl came and stooped over him, patted his head, consoled with him on the loss of his ear, and looked daggers at the Great Dane, whom she spoke of in disparaging terms evidently for his own edification; he seemed to understand every word of it, and looked crestfallen, and shamefaced, and sulked in jealous aloofness.

She got up, brushing the leaves from her dress, and smiled a perfectly unembarrassed smile of *bon comaraderie* as if all conventions were waived under the circumstances. Except in a young deer I have never seen such big, limpid

eyes. Definite lines seemed to be only forming under the transparent haze of her youth.

I kept a sharp watch and a detaining hand on Nip's collar (for he still burned to do up the Great Dane) while we walked through the wood in the direction she had been coming, which was exactly the opposite of the one in which I had been going. She enthused over the beauty of the grand and solemn old trees.

"Isn't it easy to fancy oneself a Pagan, with nymphs and dryads and water-kelpies for comrades," she said, "when there's such a lot of the elixir of Spring being distilled in the air? Listen!" she held up a gloved finger—"can't you hear the pipes of the great god Pan? Do you know the crocuses have pushed their little pudgy noses through already? And huddled against a sunny bank I found a pink hyacinth looking exactly as if it were saying: 'Who's afraid!' There's a forsythia half out, too."

A sort of raciness about her features seemed to rhyme with her look of buoyant health, and the supple grace with which she carried her straight young body. Sometimes her eyes were wistful and full of thought, and sometimes she gave me a glimpse of teeth as even and keen as a kitten's. And with it all was a captivating air of boyish frankness when she faced me with her calm level glance under straight brows.

For a time we walked on in silence, the Great Dane bounding about her, mad for her caresses and suing for favor. Presently we were in sight of Kentmere and the Van Bergens' villa. Suddenly it flashed upon me that she must be from there; the Van Bergens were eternally filling their house up with guests till it suggested a Summer hotel.

The hedge of crimson-rambler which leads up to our terrace was red with half-blown buds. We stopped a moment and stood looking down the road at the great house with its big, white pillars that uphold the broad portico. It stands a hundred feet back from the rose hedge, the yard full of stately elms, and locusts, and catalpa-trees.

"What is this place?" she asked, turning to me, her face one radiant glow of animation and interest.

"It is Kentmere; my home. Probably I am rather late in saying I am Robert Carewe. And that *some* Carewe has lived in the old place for generations."

She made as if to speak, hesitated, and then said as if it were not what she intended saying at all: "I am sorry if I have taken you out of your way."

"Oh, but you haven't! I was simply browsing round, putting in time and rather dreading to go back to the house. To tell the truth we have—er, there is—I don't know why I should be making a confidence to you—it is *entre nous, n'est pas?* But, in fact, we are expecting a—not exactly a guest but a—well, a sort of ward of my father's, that has suddenly been, I might say, thrust upon us. I must admit we are none of us beatifically overjoyed to receive her into the bosom of the family. She comes from the far West and we are prepared to find her of the wild-and-woolly variety of which that region is said to be prolific. Of course I'm bound in simple decency to be nice to her (I hope I don't need grounding in the first principles of a gentleman) but I rather fancy it will be a pretty unpalatable dose to swallow. She is probably at the house by this time, and I was putting off the unhappy moment of meeting her as long as possible."

She picked a half-blown bud from the crimson-rambler and her face was turned from me. I caught the mere thread of a slowly unraveling smile. "I don't see how it is possible," she said, "to put off the—to put off the knowing the worst, very much longer."

"No, it isn't. But I wish I could tell you how I've enjoyed—how the pleasure of this walk—how I will always treasure—" I stumbled and stammered and grew red as a turkey's comb. I never saw such eyes; they are like purplish-black pansies, and her voice has little funny cadences in it so that you're not sure whether she is laughing at you or not. "I—I hope I may see



you again," I ended lamely. "I'd be simply desolated if I didn't think—"

"Oh, you will. And being well-grounded in the 'first principles of a gentleman' I shall of course expect you 'to be nice' to me. I promise to do my prettiest to enliven the task in every way possible because, you see—I'm Isadore Steele."

It seems to me I lost my grip on the universe then and things went sailing round. I simply stared at her with my mouth open and must have looked a driveling idiot. But finally I gasped in breathless, unpremeditated slang:

"You're stringing me!"

"I'm what?"

"Stringing me. You can't be the—person I've just mentioned. She was coming in on the 3:30. Wilkins went to the station to meet her."

"I'm sorry. But Sir Launcelot got so obstreperous, shut up for such a length of time in that tiresome baggage car, and I felt so sorry for him; so I got off at the station above and decided to walk, and trusted to meeting some one to direct me to Kentmere. And I did. I met you; and I knew you at once from an old photograph my father had of you taken when you were a little fellow in knickerbockers and a violent necktie, and a Lord Byron collar. And there seems to be nothing else for it except to summon the traditional bravery of the house of Carewe and swallow the 'unpalatable dose' with the best grace possible."

And that is the way she came. My flesh burns and prickles all over with shame, even yet, when I think of it. And the sweet dignity, and self-poise she showed through it all! Father and Aunt Eleanor were on the veranda as we came up.

"This is Isadore," I said simply.

My face was still flaming, and my heart doing a trip-hammer two-step in my side. I believe when the governor looked at the girl he saw the face he had seen in memory, day and night, on the bench and off the bench, for twenty years. And the bitterness he had stored up all these years seemed look-

ing from his eyes and oozing, as it were, from the very pores of his flesh.

But for all that, his manner when he greeted her was one of formal, Old World courtesy. The governor still observes the little niceties of etiquette that were a part of the law and gospel of his Southern bringing-up.

Aunt Eleanor's one, absorbing thought seemed to be that it was just time for five-o'clock tea. And the way she hustled about over the little cups in the drawing-room presently, and rang for Henrietta to take the girl's hat and gloves, and handed her her tea in her own favorite blue Canton cup, and cooed over her like a delighted, clucking hen (though my metaphor is somewhat mixed) from this I knew that Aunt Eleanor had just had the surprise of her life, in that the girl had *not* called for a whisky-and-soda.

In the drawing-room later—the girl had just gone to her room with a pretty, formal adieu to Aunt Eleanor which had apparently soothed her nerves like a cooling nepenthe—Aunt Eleanor was doing her eternal crocheting; she makes long, hideously-colored afghans of apparently interminable lengths. I often wonder what she does with them and who the unfortunate recipients are.

"She is very much like Fanny," she said, unrolling a big, spongy ball of magenta wool. "Fanny could no more help being a coquette than a bird could help singing. I don't think Lemuel has ever forgotten—or forgiven. Some men are like that. Your father was always high-strung, like a Kentucky thoroughbred. It will be hard on him having the girl about. She is not the sort who can easily efface herself; you *feel* her as soon as she comes into a room. Her personality is magnetic, but she hasn't half of Fanny's beauty."

"She must have been a cracker-jack, then—Fanny."

Aunt Eleanor dropped three stitches in her afghan.

"Dear me, Robert," she protested mildly, "how—er, un-Chesterfieldian your language is!"

"If she wore Grecian drapery instead

of a swagger little tailor-made, I fancy she'd look like those history-making women of the great, dead past, round whom cling the reminiscent odor of Latin grammars."

"How in the world the child comes by her lady-like ways, having come up, I can't say been brought up, but come up—in a Western military post, is more than I can understand. But I suppose that is an inheritance too, like small feet and nice-shaped nails. She has such remarkably well-bred hands. And her voice, Robert, did you notice her voice?"

Had I! "I should say. It's like Benedictine, and Chartreuse, and Italian moonlight, and the honey of Lebanon—or is that the place they got Biblical honey—"

Aunt Eleanor dropped her crochet-needle.

"Mercy on us, Robert!" she gasped, "are you feeling well? I didn't suppose you had as much poetry as that in your whole make-up."

It has been a case of *Veni, vidi, vici*. A sort of Cæsarean walk-away. I think she *does* feel the governor's attitude of aloofness, though she is too game to pretend to. He walks the terrace evenings with his hands behind him like Napoleon or Mr. Pickwick, and smokes volcanically. He is a very "personable" man for his years, though rather stern and severe looking. But then a man must necessarily have a dignified, and impressive, and distinguished bearing who has to live up to a Savonarola nose.

The girl has Aunt Eleanor wrapped right round her little finger. They exchange confidences just like two school-girls staying all night with each other. Sometimes she pretends to do little housewifely things with needle and thread, when they sit together on the veranda, obviously to win Aunt Eleanor (just as if she didn't have *her* nailed to the mast-head already). She hasn't even a work-basket. She uses an ex-candy-box. That is a dead give-away.

Wilkins is her abject slave, and goes

about clothed in a perpetual grin and astonishingly starched white-duck coats.

She said things to Mammy Lou—who is also an inheritance, and old, and grouchy—about her bitter-orange marmalade, that have made the faithful old thing hers for life. If Isadore were to say: "Mammy Lou, I would like a purée of humming-bird and nightingale's tongues, served with an ambrosia dressing," I haven't a doubt the doddering old soul would skirmish round some way and get it. Henrietta would cheerfully lay down her life or even her frizzy pompadour if so be it would serve "the young Miss." From the butler to the ashman they are all in.

Even Nip realizes it is a case of "Love me, love my dog," and maintains an attitude of armed neutrality toward the Great Dane.

The girl's impulsive naïveté and radiant spirit are as permeating as sunshine. She goes about touching the faded daguerreotypes and things as if they were sacred relics. She enthuses over the sugar-shears and fairly scintillates over the plate-warmers; and she takes particular pains to light her bedroom candle with Aunt Eleanor's treasured twisted-paper lighters. She is what I would call *long* on tact. She sits a horse adorably and takes a fence with the ease of a tailor-made Diana.

And shades of Aaron Burr, how she fences! As lithe in her movements as a panther; and she has biceps that would have filled her langorous great-lady forebears with holy horror, those willowy creatures who never indulged in anything more violent than grace-hoops. When she turns back her cuffs and comes at you like that, with her face all one twinkle of laughter, and her eyes like big velvet disks, and her lips a thread of scarlet, it makes a fellow's passes almighty uncertain. Not from fear, but from something or other that I can neither explain nor understand, that is equally unnerving. I have fenced a great deal with Nell Van Bergen, who is a terror at it, and strides about, and lunges, and strikes out like a grenadier, and I have never had the

least symptom of it before. The feeling seems to be a sort of cross between stage fright and what hunters call "buck fever."

I find she doesn't "bite" easily to my teasing, which makes the pastime as much more exhilarating as fishing for trout is more diverting than fishing for carp.

A young lieutenant—who, it seems, is stationed here now, and who has recently come from the West—called the other day. He was absolutely *au fait*, and I could see he was deucedly on edge to see Isadore. She was off on one of her aimless rambles somewhere about the place and I assured him I thought she would very soon be in. By way of making conversation I asked him what he thought of the new tariff schedule in the Senate.

"I haven't lost much sleep over it," he smiled in a bored way. "Do you think she is likely to be in soon?"

I was about to demand whether he thought there really was any truth in the report that the Sultan is about to apply for a divorce, when there was a rustle of petticoats at the open door, and Isadore came in. She was bare-headed and her hair had soaked in about a quart of sunshine. She had an armful of daisies and looked disgracefully pretty, and her face beamed like a May morning at sight of the lieutenant.

At once his big, white teeth sprang into evidence (already I begin to hate that soapy grin of his) and she made a rush toward him with both hands extended, still holding the daisies in the crook of her arm.

"Why, Larry!" she fairly radiated delight, "I'm so glad to see you. How are they wearing laurel-wreaths this season? Oh, I heard all about it and I'm so proud of you! Can you wear any of your hats at all any more? And how nice in you to hunt me up. How long have you been in Washington?"

"I got in on the 2:15 this afternoon," said he, as bold as a Winter robin. At least that was all his lips said, but his eyes spoke whole encyclopedias. Then she drew her hands away, and the

daisies fell to the floor, and they both stooped at the same time to pick them up, and their faces almost touched. Isadore straightened up as pink as a Southern dawn, and the young lieutenant suggested a fresh-broiled lobster so vividly that it almost whetted one's appetite.

There are a great many of them lately. In the past four weeks I do not recall more than three evenings when there have not been callers of the male persuasion. Well, I suppose she would not be Fanny Kemper's daughter if she were averse to the odor of incense. The Royal High Chancellor of Swell Togs and Grand Mogul of Pink Teas, Ted Van Bergen, is among the most markedly attentive of her sworn knights; a fellow with a positive passion for trousers, and whose tailor regards it as a precious boon and priceless assurance of fame to build his clothes even though he never pays for them.

The little lieutenant hangs on with praiseworthy fortitude against all odds. He does look rather well on a horse, I'll admit, in leather puttees and as straight as a ramrod. I wouldn't mind him so much if it were not for those tombstone teeth on which one could easily get the Lord's Prayer in minion type. He feeds little tea-cakes into himself as if he were dropping dimes into a collection for foreign missions. His Homeric laughter and Falstaffian guffaw ping-pong over the tea things till the little Sèvres cups rattle like castanets. He bays like a wolf-hound at the very first faint scent of a joke.

Also there is an ethnologist, an old friend of her father's, it seems, who is evidently very hard hit. He has written some kind of a *work*, the very title of which is calculated to cause paresis to the man whose gray matter fills only the ordinarily allotted space. And he has a puzzling tail of letters after his name which looks like an alphabet gone dotty.

He watches her in a far-gone, pathetically adoring way through his big eye-glasses, and I am positive he has

proposed to her in Vedic, and Hindu-stani, and possibly Sanskrit.

It was on the veranda; the moon showed a wan profile over the hills. Isadore sat in the big Cantonese chair, her white draperies wraith-like about her.

"Why don't you write a *History of My Own Times: or Proposals East and West of the Rockies?*" I asked caustically. "It would make one forget at which station one had intended getting out. I haven't a doubt it would sell in the department-stores in a way to make the July shirt-waist sales look fairly white about the mouth. Do you keep a notched stick and count them *that way?* Or do you do it with colored beads on a string?"

"Bobby, dear," she said, "you and Solomon may just as well give up puzzling over that as yet unsolved cryptogram which he so poetically expresses as 'the way of a maid with a man,' mightn't you?"

"But how can you endure that cad, Van Bergen?"—And I told her frankly that I considered him to be several unflattering nouns and a varied and picturesque collection of adjectives.

"He is a very nice boy and perfectly harmless." Her eyes looked dreamily off down the moonlit vista of the trees.

"Harmless! A fellow who plays three chords on a banjo for half an hour at a stretch and warbles 'You Can't Play in Our Back Yard,' when, God knows, you'd never want to! Doesn't he bore you to the very verge of extinction?"

"Not at all. You see, all the time he's prosing along in cheerful monologue, I'm planning my clothes."

"Clothes?" I shouted.

"Yes. Things for next Winter, you know. I have them almost all planned now except my hats."

I shrieked.

"I shouldn't think you'd laugh," she frowned, with tremendous gravity. "I'm going to tell other girls about it and then I'll be a philanthropist, and go down to posterity as having evolved a scheme for the mitigation of bores."

We drifted into desultory talk and presently I fell into rapturous monologue over polo and the coming paper-chase.

"It's going to be simply *ripping!*" I perorated with explosive emphasis.

"N—not the seams, I hope." This from Isadore, drowsily.

I flashed about, and if looks *could* really run one through, she would have been spitted then and there on the rapier of my righteous wrath.

"Oh, Bobby, I'm so sorry," she clapped a white hand over her lips and stifled a gasp of laughter, "but I—I was thinking of my white serge, and when you said *ripping*—"

But I was already across the veranda and half way to my rooms; a trailing, indistinct, blue cloud of sulphurous expletives that had not really passed into actual sound, going with and encompassing me about.

A scheme for the mitigation of bores! . . . that's all right with Van Bergen, but . . . Great Cæsar's ghost, what are women made of—and who made 'em!

Yesterday we did the Seat of Government. The Capitol dome soared buoyant in a thin gray mist. The air quivered with blue films of heat and a hot wind made the asphalt feel rubbery.

From the dizzy height of a south window we looked off at the pillared beauty of Arlington and the two rivers parting like a silver ribbon. The Senate was drowsing over the routine attending the close of the session. The clerk read his paragraphs like a man talking in his sleep.

"Does a Senator *have* to be bald-headed?" inquired Isadore, leaning from the gallery like an interested Juliet. "It gives such a spotty effect to the *tout ensemble* looking down from here, just like white oases in a black broadcloth desert."

The pages lolled limply on the steps, yawning, or looking out of windows with oh-for-the-swimming-hole expressions, and even their brass buttons looked fagged. But not Isadore! Oh,



not Isadore! She was beatifically unconscious of the fact that we had calmly walked into a committee-room supposed to be private. At sight of her every man rose instinctively and looked as he might have if, while digging for potatoes, he had suddenly turned up a Parian marble Juno. Even the old Senate doorkeeper made an archaic genuflection and looked at her as if she had brought a breath of the May with her. I have never before seen guides who displayed the least desire to fulfill their manifest destiny. But the way they fell over each other in their unquenchable zeal to have Isadore miss absolutely nothing, was a thing to marvel at.

At the Executive mansion a great function in honor of a foreign dignitary was in full swing in spite of the heat. We went no farther than the gates of Pennsylvania avenue, and had only a glimpse from passing carriages of women in airy Summer toilettes, of uniforms and gold lace, and the occasional profile of some gorgeously arrayed representative of kings, whose face is made familiar by the saffron journals; they having very little use for that enveloping cloud in which the reporters of old Greece are said to have wrapped Zeus.

"The poor things!" bemoaned Isadore, dabbling her forehead with her handkerchief. "How simply parboiled they will be in there! How glad I am that I am not the wife of a Somebody of Importance. Bobby, are you getting hungry? I seem to see visions of lime freezes whirling before the retina of my mind's eye like a mirage before the weary desert pilgrim."

"Maybe it is from looking down so long on that broadcloth desert with the white, bald-spot oases."

So with joy we went back to the bosky shade of the Potomac narrows. And on the cool veranda with the wind blowing over banks of purple clematis, Wilkins bruised a bit of mint with exquisite nicety, measured the ingredients like a careful chemist, capped the miracle with a bit of scarlet fruit, and served us a julep fit for the gods on high Olympus.

The Summer is fast slipping by. Aunt Eleanor begins to talk of Pass Christian and the Gulf winds. She goes about evenings looking for a cool breeze and trailing yards of shrimp pink afghan in the dust. Down by the fountain under the catalpa-trees, where a nymph with dropsical tendencies poses under an eternal shower-bath, there is a broad, rustic seat. Isadore has cut a notch in it for every time she has refused me. I must admit the thing is as cut up—well, as cut up as I am every time she says me nay.

"How sweet and blossomy your things always are!" I said last night, catching up the bit of chiffon she had over her hair. It was that soul-trying hour just before the dinner-gong sounds.

"Not extracty, you don't mean? I never use a perfume."

She looked at me as if I had accused her of outraging every code of good taste. Heavens! how thankful I am she doesn't know that I ever dreamed of her, even in my wildest nightmare moments, as redolent of Jockey Club cologne!

"Will you ever," I asked presently, "cease treating me as if I were five years old and understand that I intend to marry you in spite of all obstacles? Of course I know the governor will never hear to it, but that cuts no figure; I was admitted to the bar a year ago——"

"And at once began the active practice of golf and tennis."

I jolted out a broken bit of laughter. Isadore turned on me her discriminating smile which seems to have in it all the wisdom of Eve's entire accumulated inheritance. Not only her eyes but even her voice shone.

"But you see, heretofore, Isadore, about the time I'd get my law practice cutting its teeth and nicely weaned from the bottle, I'd go off to Europe and leave it in charge of a trained nurse. But I'm through with all that. I've buckled right down——"

"Shall we do Mount Vernon tomorrow?" asked Isadore with her farthest-North expression.

"Couldn't you engage yourself to me

for a week and see if you don't like it better than you think you would?"

At that she leaned toward me, her face incarnate radiance.

"Oh, Bobby, you're such a dear!" she laughed. "I just *love* you! No, not as you mean at all. But just as if you *belonged* to me, you know. As if I had always buttoned your little pinafores in the back for you, and tucked in your napkin, and told you not to forget your handkerchief when you went to kindergarten. And"—she flushed and turned her face from me, her fingers pulling apart the bit of jasmine in her lap—"to—to tell you the truth, Bobby, I—I'm engaged."

"Isadore!" I drew in a sharp breath and got to my feet. So did she, half stumbling over her long gown.

"And it's all because of the governor's violent prejudice and to his determination that I shall not marry you; it is because of that you have turned me down like this! He has been talking to you about it——"

"Yes."

"I thought so. Last night on the veranda, after I had gone in? I thought so; I was sure I heard voices——"

She was backing from me, her long gown caught up in her hand.

"Yes, he is determined you shall not marry me. He objects very seriously. I never can marry you, Bobby, because——"

She was moving away from me down the garden path, her face full of that whimsical light that always puzzles me to know whether she is laughing at me or not.

At that moment I saw the governor coming toward us down the path. Immaculate, well-groomed, he impressed me as looking uncommonly young.

He had apparently laid aside his judicial expression, though his Savonarola nose was as impressive and imposing as always.

I thought Isadore was going to cannon right into him without seeing him. But instead, she stopped right in front of him, and with the prettiest, shyest movement in the world put up a white arm and encircled his neck; and from this coign of vantage, with her cheek against his coat lapel, she turned to me and finished her interrupted sentence:

"——because you see, Bobby, *this* is the gentleman I am going to marry."



## AN APRIL GHOST

ALL the ghosts I ever knew,  
White, and thinly calling,  
Come into the house with you,  
When the dew is falling.

All of youth that ever died,  
In the Springtime weather,  
Meek and splendid, grave and tried,  
Climb the dusk together.

For a moment, lad and maid  
Stand up there all lonely;  
Sudden do they fade and fade—  
You are left, you only.

LIZETTE WOODWORTH REESE.

# ODES FROM THE COZY CORNER OF HAFIZ

BEING THE DIVAN OF HAFIZ UPHOLSTERED IN MODERN DENIM,  
TRANSLATED FROM THE ORIGINAL PERSIAN RUG

By Wallace Irwin

ALLAH knows, when I was younger, by the spell of beauty smit,  
If my Best Beloved scorned me I was wont to throw a fit—  
Kismet! Now that I am older I am getting used to it.

And at nightfall, when the bulbul uttered passion through the wood  
Till the Pleiads swooned to morning, at her jalousies I stood  
(And, if I remember rightly, my digestion wasn't good).

Though a callow Priest of Passion, from the altar I refrained,  
So a Gentlemanly Spinster I have ardently remained,  
Losing hair in just proportion to the flesh that I have gained.

Maids and Muses, call me old, but not indifferent, I pray!  
Fie! should chivalry require it, I would die for you, I say,  
If (of course) you let me do it in a comfortable way.

To gain favor must a Lover lie expiring on the grass,  
Stricken by the sword of combat to a rather shapeless mass?  
Why not ether or—still cheaper—plain illuminating gas?

Yea, to feel much is to suffer, and I'm sensitive, no doubt,  
That the thorns still guard the garlands, though the rose is dying out,  
I alone know how I suffer. From the Heart? No, from the Gout!

Wine of Youth in Irem's garden, fruitage of the tuba tree,  
Be forgotten, gentle pagans; for ye may not speak to me  
As I take my Barrie novels with my macaroons and tea.

What's your name, you say? Zuleikha! Gad, the word *is* oriental!  
Is it purposely erotic, or by purpose accidental?  
(Do not lean upon that shoulder! It's rheumatic, so be gentle!)

Yes, I've told my beads to Venus and I know my Kisses well;  
So a word to younger Poets who have pretty Odes to sell—  
In erotic verse the secret of the thing is, "Kiss and tell."

Take my photograph and welcome, but don't ask a lock of hair,  
For you'll see, on close inspection, I have only one to spare.  
(Like my teeth, this small collection has been labeled, "Very rare.")

As you con my lyric combats, where the tender passions duel,  
Think of me who rhymed their romance, made them languorous or cruel  
Think of me in carpet slippers nibbling toast and sipping gruel!

And if sighs of disillusion, sweet Zuleikha, come to you,  
What, by all that's sentimental, can an elder poet do?  
It is hard to look Byronic when one's waistcoat's fifty-two.

Yes, my dear, you're glad you met me, and tonight when you retire  
Waste a thought upon the Poet whose young verses you admire,  
And forget that he is old enough to be your father's sire.

April, 1905—65

# FRANCO'S LUCKY PENNY

By Frederic Taber Cooper

SUNBURNT, rain-beaten, weather-seasoned by the exposure of sixty summers, Franco stood in the doorway of his shack, brooding stonily. The slant rays of the afternoon sun threw into sharp relief the graven furrows of a face as rugged as some ancient bronze. The freshening breeze stirred fitfully the crisp, gray curls of his coarse, vigorous hair. His stubby black pipe hung dejectedly from the corner of grim lips. His vague, inscrutable gaze was turned upon an ominous bank of clouds swiftly piling up in the east, beyond the sun-lit waters of the Sound. Three sail-boats, slowly tacking their way seaward, passed successively into shadow, the snowy gleam of their canvas changing to a leaden hue.

With the subconscious working of a primitive mind, Franco absorbed the signs of a coming storm. But he did not actively heed them. His own thoughts were blacker and more sinister than any storm clouds. Ever since the hour, two weeks ago, when a jury's verdict had condemned his son to life imprisonment for murder, two images had haunted him with the persistence of a waking nightmare. One was his handsome, stalwart son, going stolidly to his living death in a prison cell; the other, the vicious beauty of the woman, unscathed, unpunished, triumphant, whose crafty testimony had placed him there. What devil's justice was it, to bury a man alive for striking to protect his honor—on the strength of the words of a faithless wife, lying to avenge her lover's death? Out of the chaos of his impotent grief and anger there had come to Franco

the ominous calm of a solemn purpose, the fixed idea of a methodical revenge. "I keela you for thees!" he had muttered in the ear of his daughter-in-law, after the rendering of the verdict; and his whole soul had laughed silently within him, to see how she shrank and whitened. He had since found comfort in frequent inward repetitions of the threat; he had sworn it softly, in the name of many saints; gradually it had taken on the consecration of a vow.

Today had been one of those rare and perfect beach days that sometimes come in early June. A rush of town-folk, men, women and children, from their homes three miles inland, had taxed the trolley cars to their full capacity. The Winter chill still lingered in the waves, discouraging swimmers from the main beach. But already a group of adventurous spirits, the first bathers of the season, were tumbling, diving, sporting in the tempered waters of the swimming pool, just above the outlet of the cove. Into this narrow channel the tides from the ocean swept, twice in every twenty-four hours, with the headlong energy of a mill race; then, checked in mid-course, turned and swept out again, a tireless symbol of mutability. Across the cove, which formed the boundary line between two townships, old Franco plied a ferry, reaping on prosperous days an ample harvest of nickels from the patrons of the golf-links beyond the salt marshes.

This was a day when money had come in a silver shower—dimes and quarters, and once a big, round dollar that even now sagged sensibly in the



pocket of his much-patched corduroy trousers. But the memory of his heavy indebtedness to the lawyer whose zeal had failed to save Vanni from his fate dampened the satisfaction of this unwonted rush of business. Of Franco's five boats, three had been in constant demand, all day long, for pleasure trips up the cove, or out to the rocky islands of the Sound. Two of these boats were even now waiting for the turn of the tide to help them up the channel. Franco's practiced eye noted mechanically the floating patches of sun-baked sand which showed that, although the current still ran sluggishly seaward, the tide had begun to rise. These boats were needed for ferry service, since of the remaining two, the one propelled by the sturdy arms of his small grandson, Tino, could not properly handle the sudden rush of homeward-bound golfers. The fifth boat, turned keel upward on the sand, flaunted in the sunshine its gleaming coat of fresh green paint. Franco scowled blackly at it, lying there in thankless idleness. Neither pride nor affection prompted him to squander good green paint—paint that "costa da mon"—upon the oldest, clumsiest, least profitable craft of all his small fleet. Through all the successive coats, applied with morbid energy, he still fancied at times that he could see, along the gunwale and down the side, an ominous stain where blood had splashed and trickled.

Impatient shouts from waiting passengers across the cove awoke the brooding figure from his reverie. With painful activity he bestirred his stiff limbs and bare, gnarled feet in crab-like motion to the water's edge, and stood there shouting vociferous threats at the small lad in mid-stream, who was valiantly toiling at the task of a man.

"Eh, you Tino, you golla darna loafo! You maka more queek, or I geeva you a leeking!" The threats exploded harmlessly, the boy giving them no heed beyond one swift glance over his shoulder, as he swung the boat around a projecting sand bank.

and ran it skilfully upon the beach. Franco waded out, to hold it steady, while the passengers stepped ashore. As he did so, the cloud of gloom lifted from his face, before the light of pleased recognition. They were Mr. Lockwood, his wife and daughter, who had that morning opened their cottage for the Summer. In past seasons this family had taken a kindly interest in the old Sicilian, for which he in return had sought to show his gratitude by the voluntary rendering of many little services. In Mr. Lockwood, he was always sure of a sympathetic listener.

"Well, Franco, glad to see you back at the old stand. The cove wouldn't seem natural without you. How goes it?"

The old man shook hands gravely. "I tanka you, Misser Lockawood, but 'e goa bad. Plenta troubo' alla time. My poora son—you no 'ear about?"

Lockwood seated himself on the sandy ledge beside the board walk, tacitly inviting a lengthy narrative. The rest of the family had passed on, into their cottage. "Yes, I read something of the trial in the papers, but I didn't quite get at the facts. Your son Vanni always seemed to me a quiet, level-headed sort of man. How did he get into such a mess? Jealous of his wife, wasn't he?"

A fierce gleam lighted up the seamed old face at this reference to his son's wife. "I tella you, I tella you da trut', Misser Lockawood, or Godda, 'e strika me daid righta 'ere!—dat Grazia, she one mucha badda wooman, alla time she make da 'ell!"

A burst of ungovernable rage rendered the old boatman for the moment inarticulate. Lockwood merely nodded in reply, avoiding the interruption of a spoken answer. He remembered vividly the rather insolent beauty of Vanni's wife, whom he had often seen on Sunday afternoons, ostentatiously coquetting with two or three men at once, on the door-sill of Franco's shack, or drifting with them idly up the cove in one of Franco's boats.

From first to last, the salient feature of the old man's narrative was his smoldering hatred of this Grazia, whose evidence at the trial had robbed Vanni of his only chance. At each recurrence of her name, his voice would trail off into raucous mutterings, half English, half Sicilian, which Lockwood found frankly incomprehensible. She was a thing of evil, Vanni's woman, a malediction of heaven, a chastisement of God! But excepting for these outbursts, he spoke slowly and with a certain impressive simplicity that rendered his distorted speech easier than usual to follow, so that the groundwork of the tragedy lay clear before his hearer. The name of Jeff Peters, the murdered man, had meant nothing when Lockwood read it in the paper. But a chance phrase of Franco's brought graphically before him the red-cheeked, curly-headed young fellow, sailor, ship's carpenter and Jack-of-all-trades, who had done odd jobs at half the cottages on the beach, and whose reckless gallantry was well calculated to stir the swift resentment of Sicilian jealousy. In Franco's tense utterance, his very name took on the value of an imprecation. In monosyllables of startling crudeness, the old man told the things that he had seen, and labeled the shame that had come to Vanni's house. Vanni had been too blind, too patient, too slow to believe; and the woman, in insolent security, had mocked contemptuously at Franco's interference. Then had come the tenth of September, the day of the volunteer firemen's picnic, the day of the tragedy.

"Dat Jaiff, 'e com' an' say, 'Franco, I wanta you' boat; I taka you' Grazia up a peecneec!' An' I say, 'No, you no can 'ava my boat. You no paya my boat lasta time.' An' Jaiff, 'e laugh an' say, 'You no wanta me taka you' son's wooman up a peecneec? It no you' golla darna biz' w'at I do to you' son's wooman!'" The old man straightened his bent figure, in dramatic mimicry of the mocking Jeff, pitching his voice to a grotesque parody of his taunting speech. "An' I

say, 'I tole you one time you no can 'ava my boat, you one beeg loafa!' An' Jaiff, 'e jump ina da boat an' pusha off; an' 'e say, 'You goa to 'ell, you olda Guin',—'e calla me lika dat, me olda man! An' my son's wooman, she jumpa in too, an' dey botha laugh; an' I say, 'If my son Vanni 'ere now, 'e keela you for dees!' An' Jaiff, 'e put 'is 'and ina da pock', an' t'rowa me a piece-a da mon'. 'Ere, you olda Guin', 'e say, 'ere youa mon'. I bringa backa you' boat, w'en I getta t'rough.'" A gleam of malignant satisfaction kindled in the somber old eyes, as he added reminiscently, "Waill, 'e bringa backa da boat—w'en 'e getta t'rough!"

"I don't understand," said Lockwood. "I thought the man was killed at the picnic grounds."

"Leesten, I tella you." Franco laid his horny hand on the other's arm. "I wait datta night, seex o'clock, an' noa boat; saiv'n o'clock, eight o'clock, an' noa boat. I goa 'ome. Da nexta day, w'en I coma down, da tide, 'e goa out. An' down with da tide, slow, slow, rounda da corn', coma my boat, an' ina da boat lay dat Jaiff, all over blood! 'E bringa backa da boat, w'en 'e getta t'rough, but 'e daid."

As he spoke with the calmness of tense repression, the old man's outstretched finger had swept, in a slow, impressive curve, following the channel of the cove. It halted, pointing to the upturned boat upon the sand, flaunting the glory of its fresh green paint, in the light of the setting sun. Self-hypnotized, he kept his pose for a full minute, dreaming over the memory he had conjured up. He could see again before him the boat with its freight of death, helplessly rocking itself seaward. The rigid figure, bent backward over the middle seat; the dark stain along the gunwale and down the side; and the long, slim knife, of which he made no mention—Vanni's knife, lying in the puddled crimson at the bottom of the boat. Only Franco and the fishes knew where that knife now lay, many fathoms deep, far out in the waters of the Sound.

Of the actual tragedy, Franco had only hearsay knowledge. Aside from Vanni, who testified in his own behalf, Grazia had been the sole witness of the quarrel. Many had seen her with Jeff Peters at the picnic grounds; others remembered seeing Vanni there. But none could be found who had seen the three together. Vanni told a frank, straightforward story, which if uncontradicted ought to win credence from a jury. His lawyer had counted upon it to save him. But Franco from the first had feared the treachery of Grazia's evidence. For weeks after the murder the girl had shown a frenzied grief which had won her much sympathy. Only Franco had realized that her sorrow and remorse were all feigned, and that the only tears she had to shed were for the dead lover and not for the wronged husband in his prison cell. As the day of the trial drew near he had dreaded more and more the malice of her vengeful tongue. He had warned her more than once, with savage threats, to be careful not to remember too much when called to the stand as a witness.

"And did she remember too much?" Lockwood questioned.

The old man's vague gesture expressed the impotence of wrath. "She no remember too much. She forgetta too much. She forgetta alla t'ing dat maka good for my poora son."

At the trial Vanni told the jury that he believed he had cause for jealousy of Jeff Peters, and had forbidden his wife to go around with the man any more. He had forbidden her explicitly to go with him to the firemen's picnic. Later in the day he had missed her, had become suspicious, and followed her there. He had found her practically in Jeff's arms, and in a rage had struck Jeff savagely in the face. He had dealt the first blow, that he admitted frankly. But the other had then drawn a revolver, and fired at him twice, deliberately, but missed both times. Then in self-defense Vanni had drawn his knife and grappled for possession of the revolver. The death

blow had been struck during the struggle which followed.

Grazia, when first called by the prosecution, had made a bad impression as an unwilling witness, remembering nothing, and plainly trying to conceal the truth. Later, when recalled in rebuttal of Vanni's testimony, in five minutes she had done irremediable harm. Her memory had now partly awakened. She recalled Vanni's jealousy of Jeff, his frequent threats, his command to her to stay away from the picnic. She corroborated Vanni's every word, down to his arrival at the picnic grounds, his discovery of them together, and the blow that he had given Jeff. But here her fatal forgetfulness returned. She remembered nothing of the drawn pistol, the two shots, the vital details that made all the difference between self-defense and murder. Her pathetic cry, "I cannot remember the pistol, I wish I could!" was good acting which carried weight with the jury.

Vanni, who had listened to her in a daze, comprehension dawning slowly upon him, hurt his case still more by springing up in his prisoner's box and cursing her aloud as a false wife and a perjurer. The jury of well-meaning shopkeepers and farmers, unimaginative men who could not conceive of a wife lying away her husband's liberty, thought that they saw their duty clear before them. Two shots, a smoking pistol, the reverberation in one's ear, were not things which a woman could forget. They promptly found the defendant guilty. No pistol had been offered in evidence, for none had been found. Franco silently wondered whether Grazia had dealt with it as he had with Vanni's knife.

The wind had freshened to an incipient gale, and big drops of rain had splashed a sudden pattern of close polka dots upon the weather-grayed wood of the board walk. Mr. Lockwood's daughter stepped from the cottage door. "Father, you are keeping Franco standing in the rain; you

will both be drenched in another minute. And I think you have forgotten to pay for the ferry."

As Franco drew out his money to make change for a dollar bill an odd-looking coin showed black against the dimes and nickels. As he bent to examine it Mr. Lockwood saw that it was of Eastern coinage, Turkish or Persian—silver undoubtedly, but so oxidized by exposure or acid that it looked at first sight like a big English penny. "Datta mon', Jaiff, 'e giva me," commented Franco, "badda mon', I no can spend. Keepa for ricordo of Jaiff."

"What is that?" queried Miss Lockwood. "Is that your lucky penny, Franco?"

"W'at you meana, ma'am? W'at you calla luckada pen'?"

"Why, didn't you ever hear of a lucky penny, a penny that you keep in your pocket to bring luck?"

Franco nodded with grave comprehension, as he returned the blackened coin to his pocket. "Gooda t'ing to 'ava da luck. If you 'ava da luck, never noa time troub'; if you no 'ava da luck, plenta troub' alla time. Waill, me an' my Vanni, we no 'ava da luck."

Five minutes later, his boats drawn high on the beach and secured for the night, Franco and his small grandson were trudging stolidly home, three long miles through a drenching rain, each laden with a heavy bundle of driftwood that was to cook their evening meal. Franco cast one last scowling glance backward at the upturned boat, its new paint blistering under the bombardment of heavy drops. He continued to scowl as his gaze fell upon the small lad toiling patiently beside him. Tino was Vanni's son, but Franco almost forgot this when the boy looked up at him with the bold, handsome eyes of Grazia.

It was already dark when they climbed the rickety stairs of the two-story wooden building where they lived, above the fruit store of Cousin Toni. An acrid odor of crated fruit, stale vegetables and pungent cheeses penetrated to the stairway and perme-

ated the hall above. A rank savor of fish simmering in oil and garlic greeted their nostrils as they entered. But Franco's thoughts were elsewhere than on food. With scant greeting to his "olda wooman," who was chopping up barrel-staves in a corner, he stretched himself to turn lower the one flickering gas-light in the general living-room. Of the many standing quarrels that Franco had with the world at large, none had rankled more persistently than that of the monthly gas bill. Gas they must have, on account of Toni's fruit store, whose two mantle burners shed a beacon light down the dingy street on Saturday nights. But never, in Franco's mind, had they burned one tithe of the gas for which they paid. It was an extortion, a robbery, a scandal in the sight of heaven. And soon the quarrel was taken up by the entire house. Every month when the collector came he was greeted with a flood of crude English and cruder Italian, that poured upon him from the landing above like a pail of dirty dish-water. The gas company had finally complained, threatening to discontinue the service. In the end they had compromised by putting in a quarter meter. That was six months ago. Since then the high explosives of insults, which had formerly been kept for defense against a common enemy, were now used in civil strife within the household. So surely as the hour came when the gas began to flicker and grow dim, the old quarrel flamed up with renewed violence. The quarter had gone too soon again; it should have lasted another night at least. Gone in three days, and the store not open after eight o'clock! Who had wasted it? Who had turned it on in the daytime and burned it for the sheer pleasure of seeing it eat up the money? So they wrangled, volubly, acrimoniously, fruitlessly.

But since the trial there had been no quarrel about the gas. Twice without question or demur, Grazia had contributed the needed coin. Franco, watching her, lynx-like, from under shaggy brows, was slow to understand.



Although drawing a good salary as bookkeeper in Toni's store, she spent most of it on stockings, ribbons and cheap finery. Suddenly he solved the mystery. The girl was living in a constant panic of fear. Although trying to brazen it out by staying under his roof; posing as the repentant, heart-broken wife, she was day and night enduring the martyrdom of a mouse between the paws of the cat that plays with it. Franco had threatened to kill her if she betrayed Vanni; and every hour in the twenty-four she shrank from the expected knife-thrust. He could read this in her haggard face, her handsome eyes, which had lost their boldness, her whole demeanor of a furtive, hunted creature. Above all, she was afraid of the dark. Night after night Franco had crept down the hallway, at one, at two, at three o'clock and had seen through the crack in her door the ga -light streaming up in criminal wastefulness. And this habit, which she had adopted as a measure of self-preservation, suggested to Franco the means of his revenge.

Patiently he had waited for the ripening of conditions. It was now three days since a quarter had been put in the meter. Today was Saturday; there would be scant gas left in the meter when Toni closed his store for the night. The storm without continued unabated, compelling the close fastening of every window. The air in the rooms upstairs, stale with the blending of many odors, hung heavy and tangible as a pall. Brooding over his fixed idea, Franco paid scant attention to what passed around him, either during the evening meal, or later, when, squatted in a corner, he mended a crab-net and puffed at his stubby pipe, adding cheap tobacco to the lingering fumes of frying oil. Only once did he raise his eyes to Grazia, as she passed him furtively, and then only to curse her softly, purring over the oaths, like some great feline over a bone.

Gradually a hush had fallen upon the noisy old street, down by the wharves. The bustle and turmoil of

Saturday night was well-nigh over. Awnings had been drawn up, shutters closed; even the saloons, one after another, had put out their lights. A woman, with a pail of beer half-hidden under her shawl, was vanishing up a side alley. Three drunken sailors, on a dark street corner, were hilariously helping each other to keep their feet. Toni's store had ceased to do business more than an hour ago. Upstairs, in the dark chamber which he shared with Tino, Franco, silent and inscrutable, kept vigil. Heavy claps of thunder made the boy turn restlessly, but did not break the sound sleep of childhood.

It was one o'clock when Franco crept stealthily down the narrow, rickety hallway, to Grazia's door, his bare, gnarled feet padding softly on the warped boards of the pine flooring. Furtively he struck a match, gnashing his sparse old teeth at the noise and sputter that it made. The hall burner, though turned on full, responded with only a feeble flicker. Franco felt, at the sight, the grim contentment of a headsman at the tempered edge of a well-ground axe. But he still had some minutes to wait. The gas burned lower and lower, a mere thread of light, a pinhead, a vanishing spark. In Grazia's room, it was so low that not a ray came through crack or keyhole. Would the unaccustomed darkness waken her? That was the question upon which the whole success of Franco's plan now hung. With bated breath, he kept his self-appointed death-watch in the hall, until with a final puff the last needle point of light went out. Ten minutes later—it had seemed an hour—he ventured to move. Shading a guttering candle with his bent, misshapen fingers, he crept painfully, snail-like, down the stairs that threatened at every step to betray him noisily, through the lower hall, and then down the second flight, a mere ladder with the lower rung missing, that led to the shallow cellar where the meter was placed.

Empty boxes, barrels, baskets, exhaling a musty smell, a suggestion of



decomposing fruit, cumbered the cellar on every side, rising in tottering walls, between which Franco crept, as through a narrow lane. The guttering candle, shining feebly through the slats of empty crates, cast weird shadows before him and behind—ominous, symbolic, suggestive of the bars of subterranean prisons. Reaching his goal, Franco stuck his candle in a blob of melted wax, upon the bottom of an upturned strawberry box, and felt in his pocket for the twenty-five cent piece which was to set the meter once more in operation, and send the deadly stream of gas flowing through the open cock into Grazia's room. But in the handful of small change which he brought forth, there was no coin of the required denomination. Pennies there were in plenty, nickels more than a score, a dollar or two in dimes, but not a single quarter. He remembered now, he must have given his last quarter to Mr. Lockwood, in making change. For the first time, Franco's iron nerve was shaken. It was not alone the disappointment of a vengeance deferred, but a superstitious fear that fate was against him, that shook the old man as with a sudden ague. Once again it was borne in upon him that he "no 'ada da luck."

But as he returned the money to his pocket, one piece slipped from his hand, spun round and rolled in the direction of the meter. As his tremulous fingers closed over it again, he recognized it as his "luckada pen'," the worthless coin that the dead Jeff had tauntingly flung at him. He measured it thoughtfully with his eye; then, hoping against hope, opened the slot in the meter, dropped in the coin, and tentatively pushed forward the lever. It slid over as though oiled; there was the reassuring jingle of the coin dropping into the box below, among its fellows. The gas was once more free to flow. If anything had

been needed to round out the sum of Franco's vengeance, to fill his cup of grim content to overflowing, it was this added irony of making the coin of her dead lover the instrument of the woman's punishment.

During his snail-like progress up the stairs, Franco paused to open methodically the windows in both hallways, lest the smell of gas, leaking through the cracks of Grazia's door, should draw attention before its appointed work was done. Then he stretched himself on his narrow couch, in the full contentment of a weighty duty faithfully performed. No foreshadowing of remorse troubled his serene consciousness of having performed an act of simple justice. In a land where juries blundered, and where the police interfered strangely in what, according to his simple ethics, were strictly family affairs, he had executed judgment, he had avenged the honor of his house. After many weeks, he felt that he could sleep in peace.

The afternoon of the coroner's inquest, which had resulted not unnaturally in a verdict of suicide against the convict's unhappy wife, the gas collector stopped as he was leaving the house and spoke with unwonted civility to old Franco, smoking in the doorway.

"I guess you dagoes have had your share of trouble lately, but for all that I can't turn in bad quarters, at the office. You will have to give me something better than this." As he spoke, he reached forth the tarnished Oriental coin that the dead Jeff had received—through what circuitous chain of sailor folk no one would ever know.

Old Franco took it serenely, with an enigmatic smile. "I tanka you," he said, with his inscrutable gaze fixed upon the coin. "Dat my pocka' piece, my luckada pen'. It a fina t'ing to 'ava da luck."



# A TALE OF HARLEM

By Ethel M. Kelley

SHE was a love-lorn maid who dwelt  
In Harlem (see Manhattan);  
She had a figure lithe and svelt—  
Her skirts drooped down below her belt,  
She liked describing what she felt  
And quoting Greek and Latin.

She wrote for Sunday magazines  
A column culinary:  
—"The Nutriment You Find in Beans,"  
On women in the Philippines,  
And "How to Live Within Your Means,"  
If you desire to marry.

A chamber dark she dwelt within—  
(For this, each week, three dollars.  
'Twas like herself, both long and thin);  
She, in a bath-tub lined with tin,  
Was privileged to wash her skin,  
Her handkerchiefs and collars.

There're many readings of the phrase,  
"To live in New York City."  
'Tis done in several thousand ways  
That would but fill us with amaze,  
Yet who to judge which most to praise  
And which the most to pity?

Some dwell upon the Avenue  
And flunkies line their hall-way.  
(But these are not exempt, 'tis true,  
From ills that fall on me and you);  
Some in a single chamber do  
Housekeeping in a small way.

Yet who shall draw the line between  
Real life and mere existence?  
Each seeks the highest he has seen,  
And strives to keep his conduct clean  
Or seeks a moral that will screen  
The line of least resistance.

But otherwise, I quite believe  
 The thing is nearly equal.  
 Fate holds few prizes up her sleeve;  
 What she bestows she must retrieve,  
 And compensation, by your leave,  
 Is worked out in the sequel.

Yet I confess that at this stage  
 Her exigence was cruel.  
 She earned a mere starvation wage,  
 Lived shut within a darkened cage—  
 Looked like a figure on a page  
 That's drawn by Peter Newell.

And when her energy was spent  
 Upon her daily column,  
 She had no friends on whom to vent  
 Accumulated temperament—  
 No books save those the city lent—  
 The Public Library volume!

And often in her loneliness  
 Did desolation choke her.  
 'Tis sad to be Art's voteress,  
 To fix your eyes upon success,  
 And yet be conscious, more or less,  
 That you are mediocre.

There dwelt across the hall from her  
 A lonely fellow lodger.  
 About his room she heard him stir;  
 She knew what all his habits were.  
 A *rencontre* did not occur,  
 Because he tried to dodge her.

He was a simple farmer's son—  
 (Her father was a preacher).  
 He tired of work that was not done  
 Though one arose before the sun,  
 Of keeping always on the run  
 To feed some nosing creature.

He found a place as shipping clerk  
 In Harlem (see Manhattan).  
 No matter what he shipped—his work  
 Was ably done, he did not shirk,  
 But still stuck to it like a Turk—  
 Of industry the pattern!

If any man would prove him, he  
 Would surely have a fistful!  
 And only those who know the free,  
 Great life of hill, or plain, or sea  
 Look out on men so fearlessly  
 With eyes that are so wistful.

His neighbor he had never seen,  
But he had heard about her.  
He knew no difference between  
Real intellect and "culturine."  
A fêted literary queen,  
He had no cause to doubt her.

Thus other people we assign  
Exaggerated riches.  
Oh, every fabric's fair and fine  
When we see only the design;  
But when the work is yours and mine  
We know the crooked stitches!

One evening as he climbed the stair  
To seek his lonely bedroom,  
Our hero almost knew despair  
So much he hungered for the air  
Of sloping hills all green and fair,  
Far—far away from said room.

He found the darkness dense and deep,  
And suddenly he stumbled  
On something huddled in a heap  
Which strangely made his senses leap.  
"I wish my landlady would keep  
Her hallway lit," he grumbled.

Then all at once he heard a sound  
Scarce audible, but human;  
And swiftly did his pulses pound,  
For then he knew the moaning mound  
That on the stairway he had found  
To be a swooning woman!

There was no need that he be told  
Just what to do to aid her.  
In arms that had been used to hold  
The littlest lambkin of the fold  
He gathered her poor form and cold,  
And on his bed he laid her.

And when to consciousness again  
His kindly efforts brought her  
From out a world beyond our ken,  
A man—he seemed a prince of men—  
Was chafing her chill brow, and then  
Applying to it water.

They gazed upon each other, she  
With wide, emerging spirit  
Returning from Infinity.  
"You have been very good to me.  
I'm better now, I think." Said he,  
"I'm very glad to hear it."

But when to gain her feet she tried  
She found they would not hold her,  
And in her helplessness there died  
Her last remaining bit of pride,  
And then and there the maiden cried  
Her heart out on his shoulder.

He felt he was beneath her feet  
Unworthy as the sod is;  
Imagine how he found it sweet  
To feel upon his bosom beat  
In self-surrender so complete  
The heart of this bright goddess!

Imagine how her soul was awed  
To feel that she was wrapt in  
Such stalwart arms, and on such broad,  
Strong shoulders privileged to nod.  
He seemed to her like some Greek god—  
Or else a foot-ball captain!

The end's not difficult to see  
Since this was the beginning;  
Two hearts as lonely as could be  
And starving both for sympathy,  
The little jade, Propinquity,  
Soon scored another inning.

On the parched plain that was her life  
He dawned like an oasis.  
He ate his dinner with his knife,  
But thanks to years of strain and strife  
She'd not refuse to be his wife  
On such a trivial basis.

And let those laugh who have not learned  
That love is what we see it!  
It's not a gift to us returned,  
Nor some reward that we have earned;  
It's simply beauty we've discerned  
By trying hard to be it.

And although they had pined alone,  
They'd clung to the Ideal,  
Had faith in glimpses that were shown  
Of higher things than they had known.  
Now Ideality had thrown  
Her mantle round the real.

THE MORAL is that if we do  
Our best with every minute,  
Though opportunities are few  
And life seems dark and dreary too,  
There'll be a chance for me and you  
To prove all there is in it.



# THE SULPHITIC THEORY

By Gelett Burgess

THE terms "Bromide" and "Sulphite" as applied to psychological rather than chemical analysis have already become, among the *illuminati*, so widely adopted that these denominations already stand in considerable danger of being weakened in significance through a too flimsy use. The adjective "bromidic" is, at present, adopted as a general vehicle, a common carrier, for the thoughtless damnation of the Philistine. The time has come to formulate, authoritatively, the precise scope of conversation which such distinctions suggest, and define the shorthand of conversation which its use has made practicable. The rapid spread of the theory, traveling from Sulphite to Sulphite, like the spark of a pyrotechnic set-piece, till the thinking world has been over-violently illuminated, has obscured its genesis and diverted attention from the simplicity and force of its fundamental principles\*. In this its progress has been like that of slang, which, gaining in popularity, must inevitably decrease in aptness and definiteness.

In attempting to solve the problem which for so long was the despair of philosophers I have made modest use of the word "theory." But to the Sulphite, this simple, convincing, comprehensive explanation is more; it is an opinion, even a belief, if not a *credo*. But as I shall proceed scientifically, my conclusion will, I trust, effect conclusive proof of what was an *a priori* hypothesis.

\*It was in April that I first heard of the Theory from the Chatelaine. The following August, in Venice, a lady said to me: "Aren't these old palaces a great deal more sulphitic in their decay than they were originally, during the Renaissance?"

The history of the origin of the theory is brief. The Chatelaine of a certain sugar-plantation in Louisiana, in preparing a list of guests at her house-party, discovered, in one of those explosive moments of inspiration, that all people were easily divided into two fundamental groups or families, the Sulphites and the Bromides. The revelation was apodictic, convincing; it made life a different thing; it made society almost plausible. The primary theorems sprang quickly into her mind, and, such is their power, that they have attained almost the nature of axioms.

We have all tried our hands at categories. Philosophy is, itself, but a series of definitions. What, then, made the Chatelaine's theory remarkable, when Civilization has wearied itself with distinctions? The attempt to classify one's acquaintance is the common sport of the thinker, from the fastidious who say: "There are two kinds of persons—those who like olives and those who don't," to the fatuous, immemorial lover who says: "There are two kinds of women—Daisy, and the Other Kind!"

Other previous attempts, less fantastic, have had this fault in common: their categories are susceptible of gradation—extremes fuse, one into the other. What thinking person has not felt the need of some definite, final, absolute classification? We speak of "my kind" and "the other sort," of Those who Understand, of Impossibles, and Outsiders. Some of these categories have attained considerable vogue. There is the Bohemian versus the Philistine, the Radical versus the Conservative, the Interesting versus

the Bores, and so on. But always there is a shifting population at the vague frontier—the types intermingle and lose identity. Your Philistine is the very one who says: "This is Liberty Hall!"—and one must drink beer whether one likes it or not. It is the conservative business man, hard headed, stubborn, who is converted by the mind-reader or the spiritualistic medium—one extreme flying to the other. It is the bore who, at times, unconsciously, to himself, amuses you to the point of repressed laughter. These terms are fluent—your friends have a way of escaping from the labeled boxes into which you have put them; they seem to defy your definitions, your Orders and Generals. Fifteen minutes' consideration of the great Sulphitic Theory will, as the patent medicines say, convince one of its efficacy. A Bromide will never jump out of his box into that ticketed "Sulphite."

So much comment has been made upon the terminology of this theory that it should be stated frankly, at the start, that the words Sulphite and Bromide, and their derivatives, sulphitic and bromidic, are in themselves so sulphitic that they are not susceptible of explanation. In a word, they are empirical, although, accidentally it might seem, they do appeal and convince the most skeptical. Swallow them whole, therefore, and you will be so much better for the dose that, upon finishing this thesis you will say, "Why, *of course*, there are no other words possible!"

Let us, then, at last, proceed with a general statement of the theory and then develop some of its minor corollaries. It is comparatively easy to define the Bromide; let us first consider his traits and then classify the Sulphite by a mere process of exclusion.

In this our world the Bromides constitute, alas! by far the larger group. In this, the class resembles the primary bodies of other systems of classification, such as the Philistines, the Conservatives, the Bores and so on, *ad nauseum*. The Bromide does his thinking by syndicate. He follows the main-trav-

eled roads, he goes with the crowd. In a word, they all think and talk alike—one may predicate their opinion upon any given subject. They follow custom and costume, they obey the Law of Averages. They are, intellectually, all peas in the same conventional pod, unenlightened, prosaic, living by rule and rote. They have their hair cut every month and their minds keep regular office-hours. They worship dogma. The Bromide conforms to everything sanctioned by the majority, and may be depended upon to be trite, banal and arbitrary.

So much has a mere name already done for us that we may say, boldly, and this is our First Theorem: that all Bromides are bromidic in every manifestation of their being. But a better comprehension of the term, and one which will perhaps remove the taint of malediction, will be attained if we examine in detail a few essential bromidic tendencies. The adjective is used more in pity than in anger or disgust. The Bromide can't possibly help being bromidic—though on the other hand, he wouldn't if he could.

The chief characteristic, then, seems to be a certain reflex psychological action of the bromidic brain. This is evidenced by the accepted bromidic belief that each of the ordinary acts of life is, and necessarily must be, accompanied by its own especial remark or opinion. It is an association of ideas intensified in each generation by the continual co-relation of certain groups of brain-cells. It has become not only unnecessary for him to think, but almost impossible, so deeply these well-worn paths of thought have become. His intellectual processes are automatic—his train of thought can never get off the track.

A single illustration will suffice for analysis. You have heard it often enough; fie upon you if you have said it!

*"If you saw that sunset painted in a picture, you'd never believe it would be possible!"*

It must be borne distinctly in mind that it is not merely because this re-

mark is trite that it is bromidic; it is because that, with the Bromide, the remark is *inevitable*. One expects it from him, and one is never disappointed. And, moreover, it is always offered by the Bromide as a fresh, new, apt and rather clever thing to say. He really believes, no doubt, that it is original—it is, at any rate, neat, as you may prove by his evident expectation of applause. Back in the shadows of his mind, perhaps, may be the ghost of a perception that the thing has been said before, but his vanity exorcises the spirit and his consciousness is undisturbed. The remark follows upon the physical or mental stimulus as the light of the day; he cannot then be true to any other impulse. Originality was exhibited in him since his great-grandmother's time. He has "got the habit."

Accepting his irresponsibility, and with all charity to his undeveloped personality, we may note a few other examples of his mental reflexes. The list is long, but it would take a large encyclopædia to exhaust the subject.

If you both happen to know Mr. Smith, of Des Moines, the Bromide inevitably will say:

"This world is such a small place, after all, isn't it?"

The Bromide never mentions such a vulgar thing as a birth, but says:

"The Year Baby Came."

The Bromide's euphemisms are the slang of her caste. When she departs from her visit, she says:

"I've had a perfectly charming time."

"It's SO good of you to have asked me!"

"Now, DO come and see us!"

And when her caller leaves, her mind springs with a snap to fasten the time-worn farewell:

"Now you have found the way, do come often!"

And this piece of ancient cynicism has run through a thousand changes:

"Of course if you leave your umbrella at home it's sure to rain!"

But comment, to the Sulphite, is unnecessary. These remarks would all be in his Index Epurgatorius, if one

were necessary. But, except in jest it would never even occur to him to use any of the following remarks:

"I don't know much about Art, but I know what I like."

"My mother is seventy years old, but she doesn't look a day over fifty."

"That dog understands every word I say."

"You'll feel differently about these things when you're married!"

"It isn't money, it's the PRINCIPLE of the thing I object to."

"Why aren't there any good stories in the magazines, nowadays?"

"I'm afraid I'm not educated up to Japanese prints."

"The Japanese are such an interesting little people!"

"No, I don't play chess. I haven't got that kind of a brain."

"No, I never intend to be married."

"I thought I loved him at the time, but of course it wasn't really love."

"Funny how some people can never learn to spell!"

"If you'd only come yesterday, this room was in perfect order."

"I don't care for money—it's what I can do with it."

"I really oughtn't to tell this, but I know you understand."

"Why, I know you better than you know yourself!"

"Now, this thing really happened!"

"It's a great compliment to have a child like you."

"The Salvation Army reaches a class of people that churches never do."

"It's a mistake for a woman to marry a man younger than herself—women age so much faster than men. Think what she'll be, when he's fifty!"

"It's bad enough to see a man drunk—but, oh! a woman!"

"I never read serials."

"It isn't so much the heat (or the cold), as the humidity in the air."

"This tipping system is terrible, but what can one do about it?"

"I don't know what we ever did without the telephone!"

"After I've shampooed my hair I can't do a thing with it!"

"Of course if you happen to want a

*policeman, there's never one within miles of you."*

No, it isn't so much the things they say, as the way they say them! Do you not recall the smug, confident look, the assurance of having said a particularly happy thing? They come inevitably as the alarm clock; when the hands of circumstance touch the hour, the bromidic remark will surely go off.

But, lest one make too much of this particular symptom, let us consider a few other tendencies. The Bromide has no surprises for you. When you see one enter a room, you must reconcile yourself to the inevitable. No hope for flashes of original thought, no illuminating, newer point of view, no sulphitic flashes of fancy—the steady glow of bromidic conversation and action is all one can hope for. He may be wise and good, he may be loved and respected—but he lives inland; he puts not forth to sea. He is there when you want him, always the same.

Bromides also enjoy pathological symptoms. They are fond of describing sickness and death-bed scenes. "His face swelled up to twice its natural size!" they say, in awed whispers. They attend funerals with interest and scrutiny.

We are all born with certain bromidic tendencies, and children are the greatest bromides in the world. What boy of ten will wear a collar different from what his school-mates are all wearing? He must conform to the rule and custom of the majority or he suffers fearfully. But, if he has a sulphitic leaven in his soul, adolescence frees him from the tyrannical traditions of thought. In costume, perhaps, men are still more bromidic than women. A man has, for choice, a narrow range in garments—for everyday wear at most but four coats, three collars and two pairs of shoes.

Fewer women become Sulphites. The confession is ungallant and painful, but it must be made. We have only to watch them, to listen—and to pity.

What, then, is a Sulphite? Ah, that is harder to define. A Sulphite is a person who does his own thinking, he

is a person who has surprises. One can never foresee what he will do, except that it will be a direct and spontaneous manifestation of his own personality.

You cannot tell them by the looks. Sulphites come together like drops of mercury, in this bromidic world. Unknown, unsuspected groups of them are scattered over the earth, and we never know where we are going to meet them—like fireflies in Summer, like Americans in Europe. The Bromide we have always with us, predicating the obvious. The Sulphite appears, uncalled, like a phantom.

But you must not jump at the conclusion that all Sulphites are agreeable company. This is no classification as of desirable and undesirable people. The Sulphite, from his very nature, must continually surprise you by an unexpected course of action. He must explode. You never know what he will say or do. He is always sulphitic, but as often impossible. He will not bore you, but he may shock you. You find yourself watching him to see what is coming next, and it may be a subtle jest, a paradox, or an atrocious violation of etiquette.

All cranks, all reformers, and most artists are sulphitic. The insane asylums are full of Sulphites. They not only do ordinary things in unusual ways, but they do unusual things in ordinary ways. What is more intensely sulphitic than, when you have said your farewells, to go immediately? Or, as you swim out to rescue a drowning girl, to keep your pipe burning, all the while? They do not attempt to "entertain" you, but let you choose your own pastime. When they present a gift, it has either rhyme or reason to it. Their letters are not passed about to be read by the family.

Hamlet was a sulphite; Polonius a Bromide. Becky Sharp was sulphitic; Amelia Sedley bromidic. So we might follow the line of cleavage between the two groups in History, Art, Religion. Compare, for instance, President Roosevelt with his predecessor in office—the Unexpected versus the sedate Thermometer of Public Opinion. Compare

Bernard Shaw with Marie Corelli—one would swear that their very brains were differently colored! One need not consult one's prejudice, affection or taste—the Sulphitic Theory explains without either condemning or approving. The leopard cannot change his spots.

But if, along with these contrasts, we take, for example, Lewis Carroll as opposed to, say, Dr. Johnson, we are brought up against an important paradox. It is, however, only an apparent paradox—beneath it lies a vital principle. Dr. Johnson was, himself, a Sulphite of the Sulphites, but how intensely bromidic were his writings! One yawns to think of them. As for Lewis Carroll, in his classic nonsense, so sulphitic as often to be accused by Bromides of having a secret meaning, his private life was that of a Bromide. Read his biography and learn the terrors of his formal, set entertainments to the little girls whom he patronized! They knew what to expect of him, and he never, however agreeably, disappointed them. No, unfortunately a Sulphite does not always produce sulphitic art. How many writers we know who are more interesting than their work! How many who are infinitely less so!

Such considerations point inevitably to the truth that our theory depends essentially not upon action or talk, but upon the quality and rationale of thought. It is a question of Potentiality, rather than of Dynamics. It is the process of reasoning which concerns us, not its translation into conduct. A man may be a devoted supporter of Mrs. Grundy and yet be a Sulphite, if he has, in his own mind, reached an original conclusion that society needs her safeguards. He may be the wildest-eyed of Anarchists and yet bromidic, if he has accepted another's reasons and swallowed the propaganda whole.

It will be doubtless through a misconception of this principle that the first schism in the Sulphitic Theory arises. Already the cult has become so important that a newer heretic sect threatens it. These protestants cannot believe that there is a definite line

to be drawn between Sulphites and Bromides, and hold that one may partake of a dual nature. All such logic is fatuous, and founded upon a misconception of the Theory.

There is, however, a subtlety which has perhaps had something to do with confusing the neophyte. It is this: Sulphitism and Bromidism are, symbolically, the two halves of a circle, and their extremes meet. One may be so extremely bromidic that one becomes, at a leap, sulphitic, and *vice versa*. This may be easily illustrated.

Miss Herford's inimitable monologues, being each the apotheosis of some typical Bromide, become, through her art, intensely sulphitic. They are excruciatingly funny just because she represents types so common that we recognize them instantly. Each expresses the crystallized thought of her particular bromidic group. Done, then, by a person who is herself a Sulphite *par excellence*, the result is droll. "One has," says Emerson, "but to remove an object from its environment and instantly it becomes comic."

The same thing is done less artistically every day upon the vaudeville stage. We love to recognize types; and what Browning said of beauty:

We're made so that we love  
First, when we see them painted,  
Things we have passed  
Perhaps a hundred times nor cared to see

can be easily extended to our sense of humor in caricature. A recent hit upon the variety stage does still more to illustrate the problem. The "Cherry Sisters" aroused immense curiosity by an act so bromidic as to be ridiculous. Were they rank amateurs, doing their simple best, or were they clever artists, simulating the awkward crudeness of country girls? That was the question. In a word, were they Sulphites or Bromides?

What such artists have done histrionically, Hillaire Belloc has done exquisitely for literature in his "Story of Manuel Burden." This tale, affecting to be a serious encomium upon a middle class British merchant, shows plainly that all satire is, in its essence, a sul-

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phitic juggling with bromidic topics. It is done unconsciously by many a poet whose verses (privately printed with abominable title pages) are bought by Sulphites and read with glee.

In the terminology of our theory we must, therefore, include two new terms, describing the variation of intensity of these two different states of mind. The extremes meet at the points of Nitro-Bromidism and Hypo-Sulphitism, respectively. Intensity of Bromidism becomes, then, Nitro-Bromidism, and we have seen how, through the artist's, or through a Sulphite's subtle point of view, such Nitro-Bromide becomes immediately sulphitic.

By a similar reasoning, a Hypo-Sulphite can, at a step, become bromidic. The illustration most obvious is that of insanity. We are not much amused, usually, by the quaint modes of thought exhibited by lunatics and madmen. It cannot be denied, however, that their processes of thought are sulphitic; indeed, they are so wildly original, so fanciful, that we must denominate all such crazed brains, Hypo-Sulphites. Such persons are so surprising that they end by having no surprises left for us. We accept their mania and cease to regard it; it, in a word, becomes bromidic. So, in their ways, are all cranks and eccentrics, all whose set purpose is to astonish or to shock. We end by being bored at their attitudes and poses.

The Sulphite has the true Gothic spirit; the Bromide, the impulse of the classic. One wonders, relishing the impossible, manifesting himself in characteristic, spontaneous ways; the other delights in rule and rhythm, in ordered sequences, in authority and precedent, following the law. One carves the gargoyle and ogrillion, the other limits himself to harmonic ratio, to balanced compositions, to subtle involved fenestration. One has a grim, *naïve*, virile humor, the other a dead, even beauty. One is hot, the other cold. The Dark Ages were sulphitic—there were wild deeds then; men exploded. The Renaissance was essentially bromidic; Art danced in

fetters, men looked back at the Past for inspiration. For the Sulphite, fancy; for the Bromide, imagination.

And so, too, using an optical symbolism, we may speak of the Sulphitic as being refractive—every impression made upon him is split up into component rays of thought—he sees beauty, humor, pathos, horror, and sublimity. The Bromide is reflective, and the object is thrown back unchanged, unanalyzed; it is accepted without interrogation. The mirrored bromidic mind gives back only what it has taken. To use the phraseology of Harvard and Radcliffe, the Sulphite is connotative, the Bromide denotative.

So there are bromidic vegetables like cabbage, and sulphitic ones like garlic. The distinction, once understood, applies to almost everything thinkable. There are bromidic titles to books and stories, and titles sulphitic. "The Something of Somebody" is, at present, the commonest bromidic form. Once, as in "The Courting of Dinah Shadd" and "The Damnation of Theron Ware," such a title was sulphitic, but one cannot pick up a magazine, nowayears, without coming across "The——— of ———" As most magazines are edited for Middle Western Bromides, such titles are inevitable. I know of one, with a million circulation, which accepted a story with the sulphitic title, "Thin Ice," and changed it to the bromide words, "Because Other Girls were Free." One of O. Henry's first successful stories, and perhaps his best humorous tale, had its title so changed, from "Cupid à la Carte," to "A Guthrie Wooing."

This is one of the few exceptions to the rule that a sulphitic thing can become bromidic. Time alone can accomplish this effect. Literature itself is either bromidic or sulphitic. The dime novel and melodrama, with hackneyed situations, once provocative, are so easily nitro-bromidic that they become sulphitic as burlesque and parody.

Metaphysically, Sulphitism is easily explained by the theory of Absolute Age. We have all seen children who

seem to be, mentally, with greater possibility of growth than their parents. We see persons who understand without experience. It is as if they had lived before. It is as if they had a definite Absolute Age. We recognize and feel sympathetic with those of our caste—with those of the same age, not in years, but in wisdom. Now the standard of spiritual insight is the person of a thousand years of age. He knows the relative Importance of Things. And it might be said, then, that Bromides are individuals of less than five hundred years, Sulphites, those who are over that age. In some dim future incarnation, perhaps, the Bromide will leap into sulphitic apprehension of existence. It is the person who is Absolutely Young who says, "Alas, I never had a youth—I don't understand what it is to be young!" and he who is Absolutely Old remarks, blithely, "Oh, dear, I can't seem to grow up at all!" One is a Bromide and the other a Sulphite—and this explanation illuminates the paradox.

But the theory is constructive rather than destructive. It makes for content, and peace. One looks through the spectacles of this philosophy and sees one's friends revealed. Though the Bromide will never say whether he prefers dark or white meat, though he inflict upon you the words, "Why, if

fifty years ago people had been told that you could talk through a wire they would have hung you for witchcraft!" though he repeats the point of his story, rolling it over on his tongue, seeking for a second laugh, though he says, "Dinner is my best meal—" he cannot help it. You know he is a Bromide, and you expect no more.

Bromides we may love, and even marry. Your own mother, your sister, your sweetheart, may be bromidic, but we are not less affectionate. They are restful and soporific. You may not have understood them; before you heard of the Sulphitic Theory you were annoyed at their platitudes, their dogmas, but, with this white light illuminating you, you accept them, now, for what they are, and, expecting nothing original from them, you find a new peace and a new joy in their society. "You may estimate your capacity for the Comic," says Meredith—and the statement might be applied as well to the Bromidic—"by being able to detect the ridicule of them you love, without loving them less."

The Bromide has no salt nor spice nor savor—but he is the bread of Society, the veriest staff of life. And if, like Little Jack Horner, you can occasionally put in your thumb and pull out a sulphitic plum from your acquaintance, be thankful for that, too!

## A WOOD-PATH

A T evening and at morning  
By an enchanted way  
I walk the world in wonder,  
And have no word to say.

It is the path we traversed  
One twilight, thou and I;  
Thy beauty all a rapture,  
My spirit all a cry.

The red leaves fall upon it,  
The moon and mist and rain,  
But not the magic footfall  
That made its meaning plain.

BLISS CARMAN.

# THE DRAGON FLY

By M. E. M. Davis

"*Mesdemoiselles, où allezvous donc comme  
ca,*

*Mesdemoiselles?"*

"*Grand Cordonnier, nous allons nous pro-  
mener."*

"*Mesdemoiselles, vous gâterez vos souliers,  
Mesdemoiselles!"*

"*Grand Cordonnier, c'est à vous les rac-  
comoder."*

"*Mesdemoiselles, c'est à qui me pairera,  
Mesdemoiselles?"*

"*Grand Cordonnier, attrapez la Belle Ber-  
gère."*

## CREOLE DANSE-RONDE.

DE COURVAL paused abruptly in his aimless promenade and stared about him with a smile which was at once startled and wistful. The narrow street into which he had strayed from the *vieux carré* proper was for the moment quite deserted. The wide-eaved cottages to right and left, set plumb upon the banquettes, slumbered with closed doors and drawn shutters in the purple shadow of St. Augustine's; their prim steps newly washed with *poudre jaune* shone, tawny splotches, in the warm gloom; the twin towers of the old church were gray against a background of turquoise sky. How familiar it all was! The mingled perfumes of "mother" roses and *magnolia fuscata* which pervaded the air came, de Courval told himself with instant conviction, from the old garden behind the brick wall, on the opposite side of the street; the great batten valves of the gates were shut, but he could see with inner vision the rose trellises along the shelled walks, and the glistening rounds of the *fuscata* dotting the plaisance. The wistaria-vine atop of the wall was in bloom—of course, at this season of the year! A

dozen or more purple cones hung over the banquette by the gate, dropping their scented petals for the feet of the first comer. The dagger tree in the corner nearest the church had thrust up a shapely pyramid of waxen-white bells. The young man crossed over lifting curious eyes to the upper galleries and the dormer-windowed roof of the old house half-hidden by a greenery of live-oak and magnolia; his heart beat a trifle more quickly as he put out a hand toward the grinning mildewed knocker on the gate. He withdrew the hand quickly and turned to lean against the gate-post warmed by the April sun. After all, why should he enter the house where he was born? There would be no one—!

Philippe de Courval, sent a small boy to France, after the fashion of his fathers, to be educated; and left at the age of twenty by his father's death, free, rich and untrammelled by guardian or family, had continued to live abroad. The passing years, the silence broken at first by occasional letters from one or another of his father's old friends, then only by reports from his agent—had made him so absolute a stranger in the old town on the Mississippi that he had asked himself savagely more than once on this, the first day of his return, why he had come back at all? He could not tell even now, pondering it over in the waning light with his back to the old de Courval mansion, his eyes roving moodily up and down the street, so long unremembered. It half irritated him to find it all so fresh in his memory—like a picture wiped free of gathered dust. The priest's house yonder, with its

lattice balcony: the pharmacie on the corner: the inset beyond the Bétat cottage, where he used to keep store in *la lune de sable!* Even the cracks in the banquette under his feet where his marbles always hid themselves! His face softened: it was a handsome face; very foreign looking with the Vandyke beard, deep gray eyes, and high forehead from which the mass of black hair was thrown carelessly back.

"I could play a game of marbles now if Jules Bétat would happen along," he murmured whimsically. "Or better still, a *danse ronde!*"

His musings took a fresh tack. What was her name, that *Grande Cousine* whose tall, black-robed form leaped suddenly out of the past? And her little daughter, who was always *belle Bergere* to his own *Grand Cordonnier*—how was she called? No matter. He remembered her perfectly—the small tangle-haired imp who came with *Grande Cousine* from the Côte d'Or to visit Monsieur and Madame de Courval. Quite unconsciously he began to hum, then sing aloud in a clear fresh voice, the *danse ronde* dear to creole childhood:

"Where skip ye so fast, my ladies fair, ladies fair?"

He waited instinctively for the response. But when it came, flute-like, clear, buoyant, from behind the wall with a ripple of girlish laughter at the end, he straightened his tall form and stood amazed, like one who has evoked a spirit unaware.

"Tall shoemaker, we promenade here and there!"

The French, pure as his own, had yet that soft burr which distinguishes the creole.

De Courval again put out his hand toward the knocker, but again withdrew it to chant boldly:

"Ladies fair, you will spoil your shoes, ladies fair."

He paused, this time with a confidence which, alas, was not justified. The stillness in the unseen garden-close was so perfect that he almost wondered if he had not been dreaming. He essayed once more:

"Ladies fair, you will spoil your shoes, ladies fair."

He raised his voice a little, laying a listening ear against the worn wood of the gate. He started and reddened violently, for from quite under his feet, as it seemed, the reply burst up in noisy chorus:

"Tall shoemaker, you will mend them, if we choose!"

Shouts of laughter, shrill cries, clapping of hands accompanied the refrain. The *gamins* and *gamines* who had dashed into the street from half a dozen directions joined hands and circled joyously around de Courval's knees. The spirit of childhood latent in the air of the *rue des Bons Enfants* took possession of him. He stamped madly on the cracked banquette, trolling in lusty tones:

"Ohé, who'll pay the shoemaker-man, ladies fair?"

"Tall shoemaker, catch the shepherdess if you can,"

screamed his playfellows in an ecstasy of mirth. Philippe caught a shock-headed toddler with roguish black eyes, and kissed her as in duty bound. Then he scattered a handful of silver coin on the banquette and in the noisy scramble which followed he escaped, breathless, shaken with laughter, careless of opening doors and out-flung shutters. A backward glance showed him the de Courval mansion, silent, mysterious in the midst of its walled garden, unmoved by the tumult before its gates.

Meanwhile, Suzanne Labranche, within the weed-grown close, crouched still at the foot of the wall, motionless, shame-stricken; the roses she had been gathering lay, a pink heap, on the ground at her knee. She pressed her palms against her heart in a vain effort to still its tumult, listening the while to the small rabble without wrangling over the silver windfall. This died gradually away with the patter of departing feet. The girl arose cautiously and crept to the gate; she, also, laid an ear against the worn wood. "He is surely gone," she murmured doubtfully. "*Mon Dieu*, but who can it be?"

"What impertinence!" She turned and walked slowly toward the house. "But it is I who am the impertinent! What will he think of me, that stranger?" she cried aloud. "But"—her face brightened—"of course he does not know who she is, the bold creature who sang that *danse ronde* with him! All the same"—gloom settled again upon her brow—"all the same, thou art disgraced, Suzanne Labranche! That sees itself!"

She might have been the spirit of the neglected garden, Suzanne! poised on tiptoe in the heart of its decayed splendor—rotting rose-trellises, broken fountain, statues black with mould, half-obliterated parterres—so frail and wraith-like she was in her faded black gown, her pretty head drooping a little, as if the coil of bronze hair crowning it made it too heavy for the slender neck. The downward curve of her mouth gave her the pathetic look of a lost child; the forehead was painfully somber. But when the long-lashed eyelids were lifted, and a pair of dark, mysterious, luminous eyes shone forth, the young face was transfigured into strange, almost startling, beauty.

"I do not care!" she asserted recklessly. "It was amusing. But, Suzanne, *mon enfant*, be more discreet hereafter. As for you, Monsieur le Cordonnier, catch the shepherdess if you can!"

She swept an elaborate curtsey to the imaginary shoemaker, swaying gracefully from side to side with the measured cadence of the *ronde*. A level ray from the setting sun turned her bronze hair to copper-red as she ran lightly into the house and passed up the grand staircase, roses in hand.

When she descended half an hour later, a soft dusk pervaded the great bare rooms below. In one, whose long windows opened into the garden, a lamp burned, illuminating feebly the wainscoted walls, the ornate friezes above, and the carved mantels. This had been the de Courval library: the rare bookcases and massive tables, the books, busts, pictures, had disappeared; the floors were uncovered, the windows curtainless; a small wooden table with

two chairs beside it seemed but to add to the forlorn and denuded air of the place.

An old man with a shrewd kindly face greeted the girl as she entered; he drew back her chair, placed her work-basket on the table before her and stood respectfully aside. She smiled up at him affectionately. "Be seated, *parrain*," she said with a little intonation of authority. "*Eh bien*, the Day of the Clock, is it not, Dominique?"

"But yes," returned the old man, eying with some discontent the coin in his leathery palm. "It is her day. I have wound her. She is a devil of a clock, that cathedral moon-face! Strong? Oh, but strong as a Cajan pony, M'amoiselle 'Zanne! She will go for a hundred years without breaking a tooth, *hélas!*" The clock-mender shook his head gloomily.

Suzanne laughed; the low musical sound stirred the echoes to soft whisperings. "For shame, Dominique!" she cried, setting her silk-threaded needle to a strip of half-finished embroidery.

"'Twould be bread to thy teeth—and mine, M'amoiselle 'Zanne, if she would lose one of hers," persisted Dominique. "Or if she would get an ache under her ribs, the monster!"

## II

"THE old de Courval house—my father's residence," inquired de Courval, in the course of a conversation with his agent the next day, "that belongs to me, eh, Girard?"

"Yes, monsieur," returned Girard in a slightly surprised tone, looking with some envy at the handsome young man who spoke so lightly of his possessions. "The accounts have been sent to monsieur every—"

"I know," interrupted the returned absentee-landlord. "There are tenants?"

"Yes, monsieur. The house is a good deal out of repair, as I have reminded monsieur from time to time. Therefore it does not rent for its full value. But the tenants, an old Cajan——"



De Courval stirred impatiently in his chair; the *séance* had been overlong.

"—and a sempstress, *vieille fille*, I believe—pay regularly."

"The furniture, the pictures—of which my father had, as I remember, a valuable collection—and the family silver—these, I suppose, were removed by madame?—I do not at the moment recall the name of the distant kinswoman to whom they were bequeathed by my father."

"That, monsieur, was before my time. My father was the agent when the de Courval succession was opened. But the house is as bare as the palm of the hand; that I know. If monsieur will return, say the day after tomorrow, I will engage to put him in possession of all details."

"Thanks, Girard," said de Courval absently. He was still vainly searching his memory for the name of that *Grande Cousine* who lived somewhere in the Côte d'Or, to whom the de Courval treasures had been left. He would like, he thought, to beg or buy back the portraits of his father and mother. "Thanks. I will come in again. Meantime I shall take steps to have the house renovated. I shall live there myself."

He fully intended to return, and he was quite decided to re-open the old house. He did neither; his presence in the city was already noised abroad; he found himself received everywhere with effusion; at first for the sake of his name—an honorable one in the annals of Louisiana—his wealth, and his position; later for the wit, the charm of manner and the liberality which made him a happy addition to any company. In the enchantment of new associations and novel surroundings he promptly forgot the agent, the ancient mansion in St. Claude street, and the flute-like voice which had leaped, so to speak, to meet his own over a wistaria-hung wall.

### III

ONE day in the early Fall de Courval sauntered into that picturesque Cabildo which neighbors the Cathedral

St. Louis in the French Quarter. He was on his way, with an hour to spare, to the yacht which at the levée awaited himself and the boon companions who were bound for a cruise in the Gulf.

A recorder's court was sitting in one of the age-worn chambers of the historic edifice. At the moment of de Courval's entrance, the case of Moreau vs. Jouméry was called. Jouméry, a weather-beaten old man in a workman's cap and blouse, presently appeared under the conduct of a deputy. He wore a look of deep dejection; but there shot into his small black eyes a gleam of sly satisfaction when they fell upon the plaintiff—a broad-faced, sleek, belligerent-looking Gascon.

Dominique Jouméry, clock-mender, had, according to the whisper which ran about the courtroom, spent the past ten days in prison, poor devil! He looked it, thought de Courval, turning to go. He was arrested by the sudden appearance in the doorway of a woman; he caught a glimpse of her face as she stood for an instant poised on the threshold; it was the face of a young girl, wan, pinched, pale; the downcast eyelids were swollen as if from weeping; the childlike mouth was quivering.

"Dominique, my poor Dominique!" she sobbed, running forward. She caught the brown outstretched hands of the defendant in her own, and bent to press them caressingly to her cheek. "Thou wert in that cruel prison, Dominique and I did not know! I, who have been so lonely! I, who have sought thee everywhere, oh, but night and day. Dominique, dear Dominique!"

De Courval moved a trifle nearer the judge's elevated throne; the voice was singularly sweet, he thought; the plain tear-wet face, the shrinking form in its threadbare gown, touched his pity; his hand instinctively sought his pocket.

"But, 'Zanne! My little angel!" cried Dominique, his lean throat working convulsively. "Is this a place for thy mother's daughter, *hein*? Thou wilt go, *hein*? On the instant! Weep not, my cherished, I implore thee. I

am not worth it, me! May the holy Virgin wrap thee in her own blue mantle! But go, for the love of God."

The Cajan *patois* was inexpressibly tender.

The judge had lifted an impatient hand, the deputy growled at Jouméry, and thrust the girl, but very gently, into a chair near him. De Courval could no longer see her face, but he noted the trembling of her little hands lying on her lap, when Jean Moreau, the big-fisted, pushed his chair back with a scraping sound, and got upon his feet.

Monsieur Moreau stated his case in a loud voice. Since three weeks, he said, he had bought a clock for four dollars, good money, from Dominique Jouméry, the mender of clocks—who knows no more about mending clocks, your Honor, than one of the apes of St. Catharine——

"Animal!" breathed Dominique, but under his breath.

"This miserable *rebut* of a clock, your Honor," continued Moreau.

"Liar!" shouted Dominique, writhing in his seat, "the clock is a clock for a prince; that jumps at the eyes, *hein?*" he demanded of the spectators, pointing to the object in question, which indeed stood in view of all, upon a little table below the judge's platform. It was a tall clock with gilt columns, topped with a riot of dancing cupids; the cupids were tarnished; Psyche, at whose knee they gamboled, had lost one of her wings. "It is true," added Jouméry with a sudden lapse into serenity, "that a Gascon is not a prince."

"Silence in the court!" thundered the deputy.

"The clock would not go, your Honor," resumed the plaintiff; "and when the imbecile of a Cajan could not make it go, he stole the pendulum. Behold how the clock has no pendulum, your Honor!" It was true; when the gaily decorated door of the time-piece was thrown open by the deputy, the interior yawned, tongueless, in the face of the world!

"Therefore," concluded Jean Moreau, majestically, "I have made—me—a charge of embezzlement against that

thief of a clock-mender. The saints be praised! That tongue which he has stolen has cost him ten days in that Parish prison."

"Assassin!" roared Dominique amid the wild applause of the audience. "Viper! May the tongue of thy mother-in-law grow a foot long!"

"Cabbage-head!" yelled Jean Moreau, leaping about like a fat monkey. "May the devil seize thy great toe with red-hot tongs."

"May thy cart lose both its wheels.

"Cajan, *tête de bois!*"

"Gascon, *cochon de bone!*"

The judge smiled behind his hand while the deputy at the top of his lungs threatened plaintiff, defendant and audience with all the terrors of the law.

When order was finally restored, Jouméry arose once more. He glared wrathfully at Jean Moreau while he admitted to His Honor with violent and many gesticulations of shoulders, elbows and fingers, that the *pendule* of that beautiful clock *had* disappeared, but how or when only St. Anthony of Padua, the Finder of Lost Things—or Jean Moreau himself could tell.

"Liar," bellowed the Gascon, jumping up.

"Silence in the court!" The deputy's order was like the chorus to a Greek play.

"It might be under the bed of Jean Moreau at this moment, that *pendule!*" slyly insinuated Dominique. "But, if that seller of tough meat"—he raised his voice above the vituperative shriek of Jean Moreau—"that vender of vile sausages, desires to give me back that clock—which is a clock for a prince; and receive one dollar——"

Jean Moreau no longer knew upon which foot he danced; his face had gone purple; his fierce moustaches hung limp on his open mouth; he gasped for breath.

"Four dollar I will have, Dominique Jouméry," he sputtered; "four dollar, good money, me. An' one dollar, *lagniappe*, for the *pendule* which is lost, and for the h'anguish of soul which thou hast cause' me!"

"Usurer!" spat Dominique. "The

clock as she stands yonder, your honor, is not wort' a *quart*. Not having that *pendule* she is wort' not'ing. Not'ing!"

"Your Honor," the full voice fell like a benediction into the hilarious tumult of the court-room. De Courval started violently; the clock-mender's daughter—granddaughter more likely—had gone quite out of his mind. She had stepped forward and stood with one hand, which still trembled, on Dominique's shoulder; in the other, she held up to the judge a shabby little pocketbook. "If you please, *Monsieur le Judge*," she said quietly, "I myself buy back the clock of Monsieur Jouméry. Behold the four dollars, which is the just demand of Monsieur Moreau. Behold also the one other dollar for the anguish which Monsieur Jouméry has caused to Monsieur Moreau."

She turned a sweet, appealing face upon the fiery butcher, who collapsed into sheepishness. He shook his head until the gold hoops in his ears swung to and fro like the lost pendulum in its best days; he grinned at the defendant, who had himself become a very lamb under the touch of the hand on his shoulder; he finally shuffled forward at a stern nod from the judge. He pocketed the five dollars amid groans and cat-calls that echoed to the mansard roof of the old Cabildo.

His Honor dismissed the case, the costs falling to the share of Jean Moreau. Dominique tapped the side of his own big nose gleefully as he gathered the famous clock under an arm.

"Ohé, Jean Moreau, *mon vieux*; when St. Anthony of Padua finds you that *pendule*, bring him at my 'ouse, that *pendule*. Me, I will give two nickel for him."

He marched out of the courtroom, guarding with his sturdy shoulders the slight figure walking before him. The girl's frayed sleeve brushed de Courval's elbow as she passed.

He stepped out in the wake of the triumphant clock-mender, following the two with almost unseeing eyes until they disappeared into the narrow

gloom of St. Antoine's Alley. The vision which had arisen unaccountably to his mind in the courtroom, and which had remained there vivid and persistent, teased his brain still as he traversed the old Place d'Armes where the roses were in bloom and violets made a purple ring about the base of the Jackson statue—what the devil had brought to him a picture of his mother's boudoir, long unremembered, in the old house!—the rose-papered walls, the high mantel, the *chaise longue* where the pretty young mother in her white robes used to lie; himself a little boy crouched beside her. Why had this boudoir leaped into his thought yonder in the midst of the case Moreau vs. Jouméry? Ah! To be sure! the clock, with its cupids, its one-winged Psyche! It was the counterpart of the one—itself tarnished, but not tongueless!—which used to mark the passing hours on the mantel in his mother's boudoir! "Really I must have the old house put in order," he murmured, and again he began to hum, but this time he did not sing it aloud, the old creole *ronde*: "*Mesdemoiselles, ou allez-vous donc comme ça, Mesdemoiselles.*"

#### IV

THERE are about New Orleans certain immense "yards" faced by brick warehouses and sheds, and surrounded by high brick walls. These, once cotton-presses—but fallen from their original uses through stress of progress—have become the *locale* of those mystic organizations which yearly add to the gaiety and splendor of this Carnival in the old Latin-American town, their spacious courts, rambling barns and barrack-like chambers serving, from year's end to year's end, as hangars, work-shops, store-houses, tiring-rooms and general meeting places for the various "Krewes." They are familiarly known as dens. An air of secrecy hangs about the enclosing walls, closed gates and jealously-guarded doors; the very artisans slip in and out, wary, cunning, uncommunicative; for within lies hidden the Thought which for a full

twelvemonth evolves slowly into the radiant perfection of a Carnival Parade.

An army of workmen—in wood, in metal, in *papier mâché*; blacksmiths, carpenters, painters in cap and blouse; scores of needle-women, cutters, fitters—what not! here work out in detail the Idea of the poet-artist. Fabulous monsters spring into being; gigantic tropical foliage, fantastic birds and butterflies, winged horses, glittering suns, fairy water-craft crowd the sheds and work-shops; inner rooms are filled with bales of silk and cotton goods, imported garments, armor, masks, gold and silver tissues, plumes, fans, garlands—the endless paraphernalia of a single night.

De Courval, entering one of these dens for the first time in company with the Captain of the Krewe, to which he had himself been admitted, gazed with amazed curiosity at the enormous "floats" which stood in a sort of orderly confusion about the great quadrangle. A dazzling February sky roofed over the strange assemblage of miniature temples, shining chariots, waving rose-gardens, forests and fountains. The neophyte felt as if he had been transported into a hitherto unimagined world of dreams.

"You may be interested, my dear de Courval," remarked the captain, "to know that the sea-monster you are to bstride next Tuesday night is at this moment being hauled into his lair." He pointed as he spoke to a float upon which half a dozen workmen were lifting into place a Kraken whose blue and silver scales sparkled in the sunlight.

"He is a wicked-looking beast," laughed de Courval; "I trust he may not do to death my Serene Highness, the Dragon Fly!"

"There will be, at the ball of the Krewe, sirens more dangerous than yon Kraken, eh, Philippe!"

"Not for me," declared de Courval with the arrogance of one used to conquer. He followed his companion into a long low room lighted by many windows, where the steady whirr of sewing machines made a sound like the flutter of forest leaves in the wind. A

wave of color—a flush of rose-pink, blue, green, lavender, yellow—seemed to ripple over the women and girls busied with sashes, skirts, blouses, caftans, scarves, to be worn by the participants in the forthcoming pageant. In one corner a score of workers were sewing spangles and fringes upon shimmering silks; and setting colored stones or buckles to shoulder knots, girdles and turbans. A couple of elderly women walked about from group to group inspecting work, giving directions, repressing overloud talking or laughter.

The captain passed into an inner office: de Courval remained an interested spectator of the scene before him. His roving eyes fell presently upon a small group seated near a window over against where he stood; it consisted of four or five young women who with swift and skilled fingers were embroidering in gold and silver the exaggerated gauze wings of butterflies, beetles and other denizens of earth and air. Philippe felt a thrill of personal interest; the Dragon Fly was himself to wear above his blue and silver mail, a pair—two pairs, indeed!—of wings. His glance followed with boyish elation one small hand which hovered like a white moth over a slender pale-blue wing. "She is making my wings, that little *brodeuse*," he said to himself gaily. He looked from the hovering hand to the face bent over it. "By St. Anthony of Padua!" he almost chuckled aloud at the absurd irrelevancy of the invocation which came involuntarily to his lips; "the little *brodeuse* is the Lady of the Clock which has lost its tongue! *Parbleu!* She is plainer than ever—if that were possible." As if in refutation of the latter statement, the thick-lashed drooping eyelids lifted slowly; Suzanne's wonderful eyes, lighting her pale face into beauty, looked for the eternity of a second into his own; then the white lids fell slowly.

De Courval experienced a sharp sensation; it was as if he had received a shock like that which brings to deadened muscles the stinging pains of returning life, or as if the heart, emptied and dried of all its blood, were strained to



bursting by a sudden scalding, revivifying in-pour. It sent him in almost insensate haste out of the workroom, across the noisy yard, into the street. "I seem to be running away," he ejaculated, stopping at length to look back at the double-barred gate of the den. "I have surely seen a ghost! But whose? But whose? St. Anthony of Padua," he added, moving on, "find me that ghost!"

It was a very resplendent Dragon Fly indeed who, a few nights later, mounted upon the huge float and seated himself astride the scaly Kraken which stretched its sinuous length through the heart of a mimic grotto. The costume, which set off to extraordinary advantage the tall and muscular but graceful figure of the wearer, was a triumph in itself; the cap with jeweled eyes and slender antennæ, the close-fitting spangled tunic, the gauze wings edged with silver broidery, which sprang from his shoulders, the silken hose and fantastic shoes, were all of the same color—the pale iridescent blue of water under moonlight. The girdle of silver network, much to the costumer's vexation, was reported unfinished; but its presence could have added little to the unique toilet which provoked admiration from even the seasoned masqueraders on the various floats. But de Courval, behind his impassive mask, paid careless heed to the costume which less than a week before had seemed to him a matter of vital importance. He saw with preoccupied eyes the pageant which waited in the torch-lit quadrangle, to unfold its gorgeous length into the street without. In truth a revolution, through some as yet unfathomed influence, had been accomplished within him. By nature, earnest, generous and enthusiastic, Philippe de Courval, left, a mere lad, sole master of himself and of the de Courval fortune, had plunged eagerly into the life of a certain set in the French capital; the generosity and the enthusiasm—by some saving inner grace—had outlived the follies and extravagances of these

eight years past; the earnestness was long dead, or distorted to frivolous ambitions. He remembered with shame, now, that it was one of these last which had brought him to Louisiana, and not, as some had doubtless believed, a desire to set foot again on his native soil; or even the less noble wish to examine into affairs long entrusted to agents. He moved impatiently on his silver-scaled monster.

"Have a care there, de Courval," cried a gay-winged butterfly behind him. "The floats are off! Experienced horseman as you are, you will find this part of the course pretty rough."

The Dragon Fly waved a courteous hand. That formless, impalpable something (his thoughts ran on) which had galvanized his besotted soul into life! That ghost! But whose? But whose? The question had dogged him throughout those interminable conferences with Girard; throughout those interviews with lawyers, bankers, builders, mechanics, decorators, which had filled the days since—again, what? "'Tis a blank wall, Philippe, my boy," he breathed under his mask. "St. Anthony of Padua—" But the procession, amid a blare of trumpets was turning into the wide palm-shaded boulevard, lined with galleries "lady-laden." He gave himself up, boyishly to the intoxication of the moment; drinking deep of the enchanting atmosphere which envelops the old town on its Night of nights—the glowing, laughter-stirred, flower-scented Eve of Ash Wednesday.

The floats stopped at length, one after another, in Toulouse street before the stage entrance to the French Opera House. The maskers dropped lightly from their places, darted into the open doorway, and disappeared up the narrow stair. De Courval, stepping down, cast a regretful backward glance at the Kraken, overtopped by tropical foliage. He remembered dimly afterward that a man brushed by him to hand a parcel to the guardian at the door—the parcel contained, had he but known it, his own missing girdle; as he turned, the



silver edged, wired wings on his right shoulder came smartly in contact with something behind him; he whirled about to see a woman stagger backward, and he caught a momentary glimpse of a white face bathed in blood.

"It was the masker's wings!" cried half a dozen voices. "Shame on him!"

"He has put out her eyes, *pauvre enfant!*"

"Carry her to the *pharmacie*."

The sympathetic bystanders closed round the half-fainting woman; de Courval, horrified, pressed forward. But a man had already encircled the drooping form with his arm and was hurrying toward Rampart street. The Dragon Fly followed instinctively, gliding, with wings outspread, in and out among the dispersing crowds in the narrow street. He felt a detaining hand on his arm; he shook it off, running; voices called loudly after him; he sped on, keeping with difficulty the hurrying couple before him in sight. The masker in his splendid harness drew after him delighted glances; but his appearance caused no surprise; it is a time for masks and maskers, Mardi Gras Soir!

He drew within reach of the pair just as they stepped upon the front platform of a downtown car; he managed to leap breathless upon the crowded rear platform. When the sturdy-looking man with the slender form in his arm alighted, de Courval alighted too; but his pursuit was a little less precipitate now. He was beginning to ask himself how he should frame his apology, or offer assistance; to say truth, he dreaded to see again that white face streaked with blood. "He has put out her eyes, *pauvre enfant!*" The words rang in his brain.

The street was dark and absolutely silent; he had almost to feel his way along the uneven banquette, yet it appealed to him with a growing sense of familiarity. He found himself in a short time walking with no heed to his footsteps; and he felt no surprise when he stepped after his quarry, through the unfastened gate, into the garden of

his childhood—no surprise, but an overmastering emotion which held him stock-still in the winding walk before the house. The starlight filtering down through live-oak and magnolia showed him, softened by the shadows into a semblance of their former glory, the ample grounds—the fan-shaped trellisses, the pittisporum arches, the sun-dial, fountain pool, garden-benches, oval parterres! He smelled violets and had almost stooped to pluck from among the dew-wet leaves a posy for—his mother! But he strode forward abruptly, recalled to himself by the feeble light which dawned into the old library windows.

The massive front door like the gate had been left ajar. He caught the sound of voices as he paused on the gallery.

"It is nothing, oh, but nothing at all, *parrain*." The low full voice stirred the listener curiously. "See, the bleeding is stopped already."

"May the devil fly away with that pig of a masker!" growled a man's voice. "Does the animal think that eyes like thine are to be had in the French Market, that he should whip them out with his foolish wings—the very wings thou hast wearied thy little hands over!"

"Truly he could have meant no harm," pleaded the softer voice. Then after a little silence: "'He lacked his girdle, that masker. Did'st thou deliver it to the guard, that girdle?'"

"Yes, I gave it, me. It rejoices me, now, that I have forgotten yesterday to carry the girdle to the Den. May it set his ribs on fire, that girdle!"

"Where have I heard those voices before?" demanded de Courval of himself. He knocked lightly on the door, and without awaiting an answer, moved across the hall and stood on the threshold of the well-remembered room. He took in with a swift glance its desolate emptiness; the pang this gave him was instantly lost in the sensations awakened at sight of the girl in a faded black gown who stood by the table, her hand resting on a litter of blue and silver threads; an old man, at her elbow, held a

basin in his hands; a reddened towel hung on his arm. The girl uttered a cry of alarm as her startled eyes fell upon the radiant apparition in the doorway; the old man started forward with a menacing growl. The Dragon Fly had cast his mask upon the floor, he doffed his quaint headgear and bowed low to the young *brodeuse*; his lips were parted, his gray eyes glowed; his throat within its costly laces worked convulsively. He seemed to himself to be struggling with some living tangible thing within his breast which was striving to escape but could not. He put out an entreating hand, which shook. Suddenly, without volition of his own, without premonition of what it might prove to be—this entity, this wrestling prisoner—it burst forth from his lips:

"Suzanne! It is thou! It is the *belle Bergère*!"

She had drawn back, terrified, before his fixed gaze; now she stirred toward him, doubt, surprise, rapture agitating her mobile face. "Philippe?" she queried wistfully.

"Oh, but I have been blind, Suzanne! How could I not have known! I have seen thee already, Suzanne, knowest thou? And when I think that it is my little playmate whom I have almost blinded! With these wings, foolish indeed! which thou hast wearied thy small hands over!" The words poured in a torrent from his lips.

She was searching his face. "In the Den yonder, yes," she breathed. "Neither did I know, Philippe—if it be really Philippe," the last words were barely audible.

De Courval permitted himself another furtive survey of the forlorn room. "And, *Grande Cousine*, your mother, mademoiselle?" he asked a little awkwardly, for he could not even now recall that shadowy kinswoman's name. Something in the bearing of the girl recalled his voice to calm, though the blood still danced in his veins.

"My mother is dead, monsieur, since three years," Suzanne returned simply. But her eyes filled with tears. "We came, my mother and I, after Madame de Courval died, to live with *l'oncle de*

Courval. The good uncle died also; it is eight years. And then, my mother."

"And you, mademoiselle? You have gone on living alone, in this old—barrack?" stammered Philippe; the litter of blue and silver on the work-table filled him with a sort of rage.

"Alone? Oh, no, monsieur. This dear Dominique, he has been with me, always. He is my father, my mother, my brother, the good Dominique. All, monsieur, all!"

Dominique lifted her little hand and kissed it respectfully.

"Lucky Dominique." To another, de Courval would have certainly said this, not meaning it at all, perhaps; to this girl, this pale poverty-pinched Suzanne, *brodeuse*, he would no more have said it than he would have paid a banal compliment to an angel.

"Monsieur," continued Suzanne formally, "I present you Monsieur Dominique Jouméry."

"What would you, m'sieur?" remarked Dominique easily. "I am but a poor beetle of a Cajan, me. But may a Demoiselle Labranche live alone in this wicked city? Therefore, I voyage from the Côte d'Or, where madame, the mother of M'amselle Suzanne, has lived. Madame has been the *na'naine* of Sanite, my wife. Sanite is dead, since twenty years, and our *bébé* also. Thus I alone protect the Demoiselle Labranche, m'sieur. Also, I mend clocks. Also, I am employed to wind the great clock of the Cathedral St. Louis. Once a month, m'sieur."

"Dominique, my friend," cried de Courval, shaking his hand heartily, "thou art a man of heart—and wisdom."

"Monsieur," demanded Mademoiselle Labranche gravely, "are you truly Philippe, the son of Monsieur Etienne de Courval?"

"*Parole d'honneur*," returned de Courval in a tone as grave as her own. "I am truly that Philippe Etienne St. Just de Courval with whom in the grass plot yonder you used to play *Grand Cordonnier*. The son of Etienne St. Just de Courval, at the service of made-

moiselle," he bowed again, ceremoniously.

"Dominique Jouméry," she turned to the old man; "he is come; go thou and make ready." It seemed to the young man that he detected a new note in her voice—an undertone of suppressed excitement, a faint flush had dawned in her cheeks.

"Yes, ma'mselle." Dominique disappeared in the shadowy hall.

"Ah!" cried de Courval with sudden enlightenment. "It was you, then, who sang the *danse ronde* with me?"

She laughed; the same buoyant laugh which had come floating over the wall that April day. "How you must have thought me bold, Monsieur de Courval! If I had known it was you, oh, but I should have died of shame!"

"Had I known it was you, I would have leaped the wall!" cried Philippe.

"Ma'mselle, the apartment is illuminated," said Dominique, appearing in the doorway. He preceded his young mistress and her guest up the grand stairway, candle in hand, the Dragon Fly, touching with the tips of his fingers the cold little hand of the *brodeuse*, felt as if the wings at his back, suddenly endowed with life, were bearing him into paradise! The upper hall was as bare and gloomy as that below, but the suite of rooms into which Dominique ushered them, with a flourish, were lighted with innumerable wax-candles which burned in crystal chandeliers, and silver or bronze sconces. De Courval stood transfixed with amazement. The apartment, once his mother's, was crowded with the rare and costly furniture which had once adorned the entire mansion; cabinets filled with priceless trifles, tables, chairs, sofas, pictures, statuary, vases, armor—the rooms resembled a museum! Here and there Philippe's dazed eyes dwelt upon half-forgotten objects—the sword which his father had worn at Shiloh, the fan presented to his mother by an empress, his grandfather's hunting cup of silver repoussé. The rose-papered boudoir remained exactly as he remembered it; a half-drawn curtain revealed in an alcove the great rosewood bed, the prie-Dieu,

the carved dressing-table. His wandering glance sought that panel in the wall where the portraits of his father and mother used to hang side by side. They were still there. Beneath each, a tall crystal glass held roses fresh from the old garden.

"Suzanne," he burst out at length, "am I dreaming? What does it mean?"

"Monsieur de Courval," Suzanne began with the precision of one who has rehearsed a lesson, "we have held this in trust, my mother and I, and Monsieur Jouméry, for you—Oh, but wait, Philippe! Do not speak until I have spoken."

It was like a leaf from some ancient romance, this tale of struggle, honor, devotion to which de Courval listened breathless.

The late Etienne de Courval, having no other heirs, had left the bulk of his estates, without reservation, to his only son Philippe. But to his distant kinswoman, Pauline Labranche, he had bequeathed a modest competence, together with the furniture and the almost priceless accumulation of pictures, marbles, bronzes, portraits, silver and crystal, which filled his home in St. Claude street. By some legal technicality that clause in the codicil relating to the money was declared null and void; the more important bequest passed at once to the possession of Madame Labranche *veuve*, who as years passed spent her own small patrimony in the rent and maintenance of the house. At last—poor, ill, frightened by the importunities of art collectors scenting afar their prey and eager to pounce upon the famous Collection de Courval—she had had the rich contents of salons, library and dining-room removed to the upper floor, where they remained intact. "It was the wish of my mother," concluded Suzanne, "that the Collection de Courval should be restored to the de Courval heir. She wrote to you once, monsieur" (a pang shot through his heart; he remembered that letter, glanced over, tossed aside). "But she was afraid to consult those wicked

lawyers, who would perhaps take everything for themselves. Neither have I dared. But I have promised my mother on her death-bed that nothing should be lost, not so much as the smallest bibelot. I have kept my word." She drew her slight figure up to its full height. "Here, Monsieur de Courval, is the list in the handwriting of monsieur your father. And here," she swept her arms wide, "here, is everything!"

De Courval took mechanically the yellowed sheet of paper she held out to him. He had read between the lines of her simple, unpretending narrative. He saw there as if written in letters of fire against the scroll of his own luxurious existence, the history of the toil, self-sacrifice, loneliness, anxiety, transmitted from the mother to the daughter—for his sake! his, whose whole fruitless, wasted past was not worth one needle-prick on those dear little fingers; or indeed one gray hair on the head of Dominique Jouméry! In the tall pier-glass opposite where he stood, he saw reflected his own elegant figure in correct and expensive disguise—a glittering Dragon Fly, which fitted well into the collection of rare and beautiful things surrounding it. Beside it, a young girl in shabby black, unadorned by even so much as a bit of lace or a belt-clasp; and a grizzled old man in a workman's blouse.

His hand shook as he pretended to read the list he held. He wanted to weep; he longed to kneel down and kiss the hem of Suzanne Labranche's gown; he wished to press his lips to the brown knotted hand of Dominique Jouméry.

He tried to speak, but a sob choked his utterance. He walked over to the mantel in his mother's boudoir. "Holá!" he exclaimed, the tension breaking, with a laugh which hinted at tears. "Holá! is not here the clock of Jean Moreau?" The clock remained silent: there was no tongue behind the decorated door.

But Suzanne came flying up. "Yes, monsieur," she said. "It is the same.

But how did you know? He sold that clock, the wicked Dominique——"

"Pardon, m'sieu'," apologized Dominique. "It was that beast of a rent—but this month, God be praised, it is paid already! And, me, I could find no work, neither the little 'Zanne—*Parbleu!* what was one clock out of fifteen? Would m'sieur have missed that clock? Besides, they are the devil to dust, these things, eh, ma'mselle?"

"Be quiet, *parrain*," interrupted Suzanne sternly—though her eyes loved him! "Thou wert wickedest of the wicked to sell that clock to Jean Moreau. And I tremble still when I think of that prison!"

"Little angel!" cried Dominique.

"We have bought back that clock," Suzanne went on, "but we have not been able to find that pendulum, alas! though Dominique has offered to Jean Moreau five dollars if he will restore it."

Dominique winked slyly at de Courval, coughed noisily, and stooped to the fireplace. He set aside the tall brass fender, and the fire-dogs, one by one, and reaching a hand into the dark void within, brought forth something wrapped carefully in brown paper.

"M'sieu'," he said, unwrapping the lost pendulum and deftly fitting it to its place in the clock. "Miserable that I am, I sold that clock to Jean Moreau for four dollars—she is worth one hundred. But when I am called to mend that clock last Summer, I take precautions. What would you, m'sieu'? shall this clock of a Labranche, or of a de Courval—speak in the house of that *canaille* of a Gascon—butcher? *Hein! Hein!* Therefore——"

"For shame!" cried Suzanne.

But de Courval clapped him gaily on the shoulder. "Bravo! Thou hast the true spirit of the major-domo, Monsieur Jouméry; I make thee my own from this moment."

"Pardon, m'sieu'," returned Dominique. "Me, I remain the major-domo of the Demoiselle Labranche."

At the French Opera House in Bourbon street, the Captain of the Krewe, whose power is as that of Haroun Al Raschid, called imperiously for Number

Twenty-three. There was a gap in the galaxy of winged creatures, where the Dragon Fly should have been; the lotus-blossoms over which he should have hovered in the brilliant opening tableau, awaited him in vain; the sirens—Creole and American—whom in local phrase he had “called out” for the Masker’s Dances, searched the “cast” to no purpose. In a hushed old mansion in St. Claude—once Good-children street, the delinquent, forgetful of all else, was bending over a shabby little *brodeuse*, all his soul in his eyes.

The clock-mender, discreetly at wait in the hall, out of sight but within ear-shot, heard the great bell of the Cathedral St. Louis boom out the hour of midnight. “She is strong as a Cajan pony, that clock,” he muttered. “May she go a hundred years and never break a tooth;” he smiled magnanimously. “There will be bread and to spare for the demoiselle, now! Me, I shall forget how to mend clocks. I am the major-domo of——”

He thrust out his head like a turtle to peer into the library: de Courval had arisen to go; he had an arm about Suzanne’s slim waist.

“——the major-domo of——”

“How thou art beautiful, Philippe,” said Suzanne, lifting her marvelous eyes to Philippe’s face.

“I?” scorned Philippe. “I am a Dragon Fly in a mock of silver. But thou? Thou, Suzanne, art one of the angels of the good God!”

“The major-domo——” gasped Dominique, drawing back his head. “They are all like that, lovers!” he continued after a pause; “I was like that myself, with Sanite. But Sanite, she is dead since twenty years. Death of my life, does a beetle of a Cajan weep, *hein!*” He drew the back of his hand across his eyes.

Philippe and Suzanne passed out toward the gate, hand in hand. They did not see old Dominique; their young faces were turned each to the other.

“——the major-domo of M’sieu’ and Madame de Courval,” Dominique concluded triumphantly.

Outside in the dim starlight Philippe and Suzanne were stepping a *danse ronde*. Their voices stole in, hushed and guarded, on the midnight air:

“*Ohé, who will pay the Shoemaker-man, Ladie Fair?*”

“*Tall Shoemaker, catch the Shepherd-ess if you can.*”

“But yes, I was like that once with Sanite!” said Dominique.

## THE SILENCE OF LOVE

SWEET are the words of Love, but sweeter far  
Is Love’s initiate silence. When we lie  
Between the lips of Life, my Love and I,  
Our rapture-blended beings are a bar  
Even to lyric speech. A word might mar  
The vision of our spiritual sky,  
Where every little bird that flutters by  
Is some world-thought journeying to a star.

In Love’s great silence are the timid things  
That fear the trumpet of the lord of sound.  
They brush against our souls with noiseless wings,  
They tremble toward us from the teeming ground.  
Some day, in the high stillness that Love brings,  
Life’s unimagined secret shall be found.

ELSA BARKER.



# A REVEREND SON-IN-LAW

By Willis Steell

THE major sighed gloomily as he drew out of his dress-coat pocket a square envelope addressed in his only daughter's handwriting, and read it over again. The words were brief:

DEAR FATHER:

I will be in from Clara Durand's about ten. Try and see me before twelve. It concerns my future.

CALLIE.

He had read the note quite early in the evening, and intended to keep the appointment. But it was now three in the morning. Unfortunately he had been detained by some gentlemen—at a club table where they discussed important things—with the aid of cards. Callie he supposed was in bed and sleeping soundly. Certainly he hoped so. He would express his regret in the morning. It would keep.

But apparently it would not keep. Before he had taken off his dress-coat a knock came and Callie entered. She was a tall, fair girl with blue eyes that looked right at a man—just like her dead mother's, the major said, wincing.

"Did you read my note?" she demanded without preliminary. "I know you received it, for Robert reported that he put it in your hands."

"My dear girl, I did read it—in fact, I've just read it for the second time. I'm confoundedly sorry, but——"

Callie interrupted him.

"I understand; I waited up to tell you that I'm going to be married."

"Really!" exclaimed the major. "to whom?"

"John Ealing."

"Do I know him?"

"I think you have met him; he as-

sisted Dr. Morgan at Cousin Ella's wedding."

"A preacher! you don't mean that you are going to marry a preacher!"

"I want to—if you haven't any vital objection. Have you?"

The major looked at her in dismay. "I should think you'd have a vital objection."

"I haven't. I care for him, and I told him so as soon as he gave me a chance. I've made an appointment for him to see you tomorrow at twelve."

"I don't see how I can keep it," said the major dolefully. "I'm due at noon at the club to meet a man. Can't put it off. He's got a note, you know. I've got to arrange to take it up."

"I told John to go there to find you," said Callie. "The interview needn't last five minutes. He'll ask you if he can marry me—you'll say yes—and that's about all except the date."

"My dear girl," said the worried major, "aren't you going too fast? The date—good heavens! Has he got any money?"

"You had better ask him that question," Callie answered, turning back to the door, "but I know we haven't."

"Poor and a preacher!"

"He's a rector now, father," corrected Callie.

"Whatever you call him—he's poor. How can you think of marrying a man in that business, with your training—your tastes? It's—it's madness!"

"I'm going to do it," said Callie, turning the knob of the door. "Good night."

Left alone the major sighed two or three times, thinking drearily of the hopes he must now abandon—hopes he had conceived for his daughter's

future and—his own. "To marry a poor man would be a disastrous blow to these hopes, but any man might change from poverty to wealth; there are always changes—any man might, except a preacher!" When he finally reached his pillow he had made up his mind that he would talk out from the heart to this preacher chap—and show him just what it meant to marry a girl of the expensive kind, like Callie.

"Confound his impudence!" breathed the major just before his first snore. "He's only seen the best side of Callie—I'll paint him a picture that'll make him sit up."

Nevertheless, it was with no little trepidation that the major, spruce but nervous in his new green suit and pale pink necktie, sat in his club and waited for the Rev. John Ealing.

He had telephoned, putting off the man with the note for an hour—that was business he had experience in; this meeting with a clergyman aspiring to be his son-in-law opened up new vistas. The major bit savagely on his cigar.

Promptly at twelve the boy brought him the Rev. John Ealing's card, and the major directed that his guest be shown into the library. This seemed the most fitting place in which to receive a "preacher chap." At least there was only one big table there, and none of those small round tables which signify various things to the secular mind and might, for aught he knew, to the other kind. Then the major threw away his cigar, drew himself up in the military style he had almost abandoned, and walked into the library.

A big, broad-shouldered, muscular specimen of Christianity rose to greet him, extending a firm, warm hand, which the major, in his surprise, took but limply.

"We've met before, major," said the young man humbly.

"Er—I believe so—that is, I was told so."

The Reverend John was not at all abashed. "It would be marvelous if you remembered me. We met in a crowd and only for a moment. You know why I am here today?"

The major looked at his interlocutor nervously before he replied. "By Jove," he thought, "I like the fellow—what in the devil drove those shoulders into the ministry?" Then he said, sharply and quickly:

"My daughter tells me you have asked her to marry you, and you've come for my consent. I refuse it."

"Why?" asked the Rev. John Ealing, calmly sitting down again.

"How long have you known Caroline?" queried the major in his turn.

"I saw her first at the wedding ceremony where I had the honor of meeting you."

"Indeed," said the major reflectively. "Six weeks ago, isn't it?"

"Not so long—a month."

"Ah, then I see you hardly know Callie?"

"I won't admit that," answered the young man.

"Of course not."

There was a pause which the major broke by asking, "Have a cigar?"

"Thank you," said Ealing, taking one and lighting it.

"Oh, you smoke?" demanded the major, and added in confusion: "I mean, you smoke before luncheon?"

"Any time—day or night—when I want tobacco," said Ealing. "But do you think, major, the happiest marriages are made for couples who know each other longest before they are joined? My experience proves quite the reverse. Take Adam and Eve for an example."

"Adam and Eve!" repeated the major. "I don't think that's a case in point. They weren't in society."

"Most of their virtues and vices have descended to us tolerably unchanged. We know that first couple were made for each other—other couples are, too."

"If you mean that you and Callie are intended for each other I am prepared to argue that proposition," the major said stoutly.

"So much is gained if you will be so good as to give me your argument. This is a fine smoke—just strong enough."

The major looked at the young man

in astonishment. The black cigars he favored gave most of his fellow club members nervous prostration.

"The argument, major, if you please," insisted Ealing.

"Good God, man—I beg your pardon——"

"Oh, that's all right," smiled the preacher chap.

"There's no argument required. Callie has always had what she wanted—even to the kind of education—I never bothered. She's been brought up in absolute freedom. She's had her clothes—the most expensive gowns I could buy in Paris, and I've given her plenty of money—when I had it," he said to himself, but went on, "I don't know whether you understand or not—but Callie does. Now, a girl who has had that kind of bringing-up—that kind of life, never could make herself over for a preacher's wife. She'd be damned miserable, and she'd make you damned miserable—I beg your pardon."

The major looked ruefully at his companion. Ealing didn't seem disturbed. The major continued:

"I am thinking, naturally, of my daughter's happiness—she would have to give up every friend she has, and most of her acquaintances. It would be like going to a strange country where she could not speak the language. I don't believe she'd ever learn it."

"Oh, I think she is clever," said Ealing.

"Clever! I should say she is clever. I never knew her to want to do a fool thing until now—excuse me again—I'm constantly saying the rudest things to you."

"I don't mind in the least," remarked the preacher chap; "in fact, I think all you feel is natural, and it is but natural also that you should express yourself. But I've always heard that talking is dry work—suppose we have a drink."

"What?" cried the major.

"I say, suppose we have a drink—may I ring?"

The major shook his head as he touched the button. "Not in my club,"

he muttered, "but—here is the boy; what will you have?" He waited, expecting to hear his guest order a glass of vichy and milk.

"Bring me an old-fashioned cocktail—rye and carbonic," said the reverend gentleman calmly.

The major gasped and stammered out the name of his favorite cognac. When the waiter had gone he looked at his fresh-faced young vis-a-vis with wistful eyes.

"I am getting old," he remarked, "and I begin to realize that customs and men have changed without my perceiving it. I'd have bet five to one you were a teetotaler."

"I take a drink now and then when it doesn't offend anybody—and at dinner I like my wine to be good," said Ealing.

The major, who had been inspecting his companion, now put his eye-glasses back in their case before he returned to the attack. "It seems that I've made a few mistakes about you," he remarked, "and it is reasonable to suppose that you are in the dark, too. There used to be talk going around about my daughter's having a fortune of her own, left by her mother. Probably you've heard that rumor?"

"I have never listened to any rumor about your private affairs," replied Ealing.

"My private affairs interest nobody—least of all myself. But my daughter's concern the man she means to marry."

"Of hers I know nothing at all."

"Then I am the first to tell you that the fortune did exist—once. I had charge of it and by reason of a series of unlucky flukes—I mean speculations, it was lost. Caroline is penniless."

The drinks had been placed before them on a corner of the library-table. The Rev. John Ealing drank his cocktail and wiped his lips deliberately with the napkin before he replied:

"If Caroline will have me, I'll marry her without a penny gladly."

"But how will you live—where will you live? I suppose in some damned damp rectory or other—I beg your pardon."

"Caroline can have a choice of homes," said Ealing quietly, "my place in the Berkshires is always kept open—I have a tidy little box on Long Island and there is my house on Fifty-seventh street."

The major leaned across the table—

"Who are you? *What* are you?" he asked hoarsely.

"You know my name—it's on the card I sent in—but it doesn't tell you that I'm the son of Cooper Ealing."

"The sugar man—you're a son of Cooper Ealing?"

"His only son—and his heir—at least he says so."

The major drew a long breath and leaned back in his chair. "It seems that we've been talking at cross purposes. I wish Callie had told me. At any rate, I owe you the truth and you must listen to it."

"You couldn't say anything to change my mind," said Ealing, "but I hope you no longer withhold your consent."

"No, I don't," said the major. "It wouldn't have done any good—Callie has always had her way and I liked you even when I thought you were a starving parson, but perhaps when I've finished you won't want to marry my daughter."

"Try me," said Ealing with a smile.

"It's this—Callie knows the world as few girls do. She's been up and down along with my luck ever since her mother died. I've won a pot of money sometimes—more often I've scraped over the shoals on notes that I manage to get into circulation. My poor girl has known all about these

things and it hasn't softened her, do you see?"

A club attendant came up at this moment with a card which the major took. "Here is a case at hand," he said to his daughter's suitor, who had maintained a considerate silence.

"This man Levison has a note of mine which comes due tomorrow. I stand to make a fortune in a week or two, at least I say so, but I've said that many times these twenty years. Just at the moment I'm overdrawn everywhere and I've got to hunt up somebody, as soon as you'll excuse me, who will do me the confounded favor of putting his name on a new note to take the place of this one. Have I made plain what sort of man Caroline has for a father?"

Ealing put his hand on the older man's knee.

"My credit might be good with Levison—don't you think?"

"I should think so—Cooper Ealing's son—" said the major doubtfully.

"Will you oblige me by letting me put *my* name on the new note?"

The major's pale face was suffused with color. "My dear boy—" he began.

"Don't take the trouble to go out of the family," said his "dear boy" smiling.

Said the major, "After we've done this little stroke of business suppose we have a bite of lunch and talk it over. Are you agreed?"

"With great pleasure," said the preacher.

"You're a lucky dog to get Callie," remarked her father, "and she is lucky, too. Would you mind telling me how you happened to go into the preaching business?"



# THE LITTLE GASCONNE

By G. Vere Tyler

A FEW flakes of snow were falling the morning that Marie arrived, and she came in so merrily with some of them clinging to her shoulders, to her little hat, and even to the showy veil covered airily with big blue chenille dots, that one almost felt like breaking into a laugh on beholding her. She really was a bright little creature, and so distinctly French from the top of her red feathers to the tips of her shining shoes, and so full of the joy of youth and health, that she was like a breath from another world. She had come in answer to an advertisement as lady's maid.

Veronica Giruad had not been keeping house in her little apartment very long, and the excitement of looking up interesting advertisements of the "French-speaking, no English," kind, and interviewing the queer little lately-landed foreigners who responded to her replies, had not worn off. This idea of having French servants who spoke no English was not very practicable on the part of Veronica. Her own French was very poor, and she understood little of what was said to her; but she was anxious to become proficient in that beautiful language, and—although she did not confess it even to herself—it pleased her vanity to have her friends envy her her foreign maid. Her husband spoke French perfectly, and she relied upon his knowledge to aid her in her conversational struggles.

Veronica's innovation (whim, her husband called it), had caused no end of annoyance in the daily life of the couple, and Mr. Giruad was becoming somewhat impatient. At the most inopportune times, it was necessary for him to

hasten to the kitchen to act as interpreter and put an end to ridiculous complications. But to Veronica it was amusing, exciting and quite to her liking, in spite of the fact that during her husband's absence the most absurd and irritating things occurred. There were times when the work came to an absolute standstill and the apartment seemed a refuge for the deaf and dumb or the insane. But for Mr. Giruad's perfect knowledge of the language and his ability to start anew the domestic machinery, life would have been unbearable. He confessed that he disliked to live amid conditions which made it impossible for things to run smoothly, but nothing that his beautiful young wife did—since he foolishly adored her—could entirely meet with his disapproval; and thus matters continued, much to his amusement and irritation.

"There's a laughing girl in there to see you," was what Mr. Giruad said to his wife the morning he opened the door for Marie; and when Veronica entered the drawing-room and faced the plump little creature, gorgeously arrayed in many colors and with a countenance brighter than sunshine, she laughed too. Marie laughed back, and for a few moments they laughed together. That was the beginning of it. Never was friendship between maid and mistress so quickly established; indeed, the relation was more than that of maid and mistress, for long afterward Veronica learned that a little romance had brought Marie to America, and that hitherto she never had been a servant at all. She ran away from the grandmother with whom, her parents being both dead, she had always lived,



because the old woman had wanted to marry her to a certain rich young baker of her native town in Gascony. Marie, who was full of romantic ideas, did not love the baker, and knowing two young girls who were sailing for America to seek their fortunes, she stole away and came with them. This, however, for a long time was Marie's secret. She could sew very well, she could dress madame—oh, how she would delight in that task!—keep everything in order, from the shoe-lacings—Marie caressed things while she talked—to the plumes—Marie adored plumes—in madame's hat; and even, if need be, Marie could clean the rooms. In fact, there was nothing she would not do for madame, who was so beautiful and whom she was already quite willing to die for. And then Marie said "*Voilà!*" with her head on one side and an almost wonderful smile, and was engaged.

The next day she arrived with a queer little trunk filled with queer little clothes, and by evening her childish personality was stamped upon her room. Her prayer-book was upon the table, her tiny crucifix on the wall, her grandmother's picture on the bureau, and even a photograph of the discarded baker—a handsome young fellow, after all—was stuck in one corner of the mirror. And then there were Marie's sewing things in a little box, an odd pin-cushion, crocheted mats and ornaments carved out of wood, all of which interested Veronica when she was invited in to see. Marie had even picked from a discarded bunch of flowers one bud not wholly faded, which she had placed in a tiny blue vase decorated with a picture of the Virgin on the corner of the bureau where her grandmother's picture stood. When she handed the picture to Veronica to examine there were tears in her pretty bright eyes. All this delighted Veronica, and she even examined Marie's undergarments lying on the bed. Such odd-looking things, to be sure, cut in such a strange fashion, but trimmed with dainty lace that Marie or her grandmother had knit.

Veronica wanted to tell Marie that she was quite a wonder, but not knowing how to express herself in French, and Marie not knowing one word of English, she contented herself with smiles of amazement and complimentary gesticulations. Marie, full of delight and thus encouraged, threw open her closet doors, and the dresses and hats revealed a variety of colors that even a bird might not be ashamed of. When Veronica said, "*Toutes est couleur—si gail!*" little Marie bent double with laughter, and then growing suddenly very serious she showed with pride her working dresses. These dresses were of cotton, a pink, a blue, and a brown, and beginning the next day Marie wore them with no earthly regard for the Winter season and would fly on any errand with never a thought of a hat or wrap. It was only on Sundays that she affected the gay apparel when she went out to see her two friends or to take dinner at the French *pension* where she stopped before she got a position. Then was Marie a vision to behold, reminding one of a red-cheeked brunette doll at Christmas time, set in a window for sale. Distinctly pretty she was, with the round, wondering eyes, the red cheeks and childish smile of the dolls themselves, and always so plump—never was there such a pretty little form, droll at times, but always pretty. Veronica admitted that it was funny to see a servant with such a gay plump little figure, such an adorable throat with a deep crease around it like a fine necklace, and hands and arms like a child of ten.

But how those little hands could work! 'Tis true there wasn't very much system in Marie's labors, and on one occasion she washed the oil floors in soap and water; but she learned quickly, did not repeat her mistakes and never knew an idle moment. And she was always happy at her work, breaking into smiles, bursting into the most unservant-like laughter, singing snatches of French songs, or stopping to relate to Veronica the remarkable sights she witnessed from the rear

windows, but always with a dust-pan or a scrubbing-brush in her hands.

"She cleans too much," Veronica once said. "I find her on the very tops of things, including the chandelier, but she is so in earnest and so happy that I haven't the heart to curtail her energy."

It was impossible to live in the house with this sunny little being and not grow fond of her, as impossible as it would have been not to pet a playful dog which ran to greet you with joyous affection; and Mr. Giruad and his wife did grow fond of her. In return her love for them simply burst from her. Long afterward Veronica remembered with bitterness this adoration, and when she would willingly have shut out all memory of the girl, visions of her young form half-way out of the window watching for her return when she had been out all day, and of the face that would lighten up when she spied her in the distance, or the hands that would clap joyously, would rise up before her. Again she would see her as plainly as though but a day had elapsed, standing beside the door which she had excitedly thrown open with shining eyes. Ah! poor little warm-hearted Marie, she could not embrace madame, but sometimes out of very joy she kissed the hat and wrap she took from her. Veronica would have given much to be able to efface these memories.

One day after the little Gasconne had been with Veronica about three months, the cook suddenly left and Marie, without declaring her intentions, prepared the breakfast and had it on the table just as Philip and his wife were deciding to what restaurant they would go. And what a smile illumined Marie's face when she threw open the dining-room door! There was so much delight and merriment over that breakfast that Marie, in order to have monsieur and madame all to herself, insisted upon cooking too, and so the laundry was put out and little Marie became, of her own volition, the general houseworker.

Alas! for Marie, this over-exuberant desire to be all in all to her friends was

a great mistake. She took all this heavy work upon herself because of the great pride she felt in accomplishing so much for those she loved, and because, also, with her hot southern temperament, she was jealous of anyone who served them. Several times the little Gasconne had suffered when the cook's dishes were praised, and she thought how sweet that praise would be if bestowed upon her. Then she remembered that she had not helped her grandmother, who had been the head of a famous *pension* in her day, without learning a great deal about her wonderful culinary art. When she accomplished her end, therefore, and was allowed to cook, she was content, in spite of all the lonely hours that she passed. It was so delightful, she felt, to have everything ready—the table set to perfection, the soup on the back of the stove anxiously waiting to be served, the chicken inside quite done to a lovely brown and the stove door left open, through which delicious aromas escaped, and then to sit with folded hands and wait.

Sometimes, now that the Winter was well on, it was madame who arrived first and sometimes it was monsieur. In either case Marie was ecstatic, and if either one or the other could be induced to put his or her head in the kitchen door and take a peep at her shining stove, even at the steam that escaped from her potatoes when for an instant she playfully lifted the lid, her happiness was complete.

"It seems to me, Phil," said Veronica one evening, entering a little breathlessly, "that you get home very early these days!"

"Well, aren't you pleased?" smiled her husband.

"I am, of course, but it keeps me in a kind of rush, as I don't like not being here when you arrive."

"Oh, that's all right," he replied carelessly. "Marie lights the lamps, gets my book and chats away at her nonsense so that the time flies before I know it." He laughed. "I believe that girl knows everything that's going on in the neighborhood. What she

doesn't know she makes up, a veritable child of the land of Cyrano de Bergerac!"

"You don't notice my not being here when you get home?" asked his wife, ignoring all the rest of his sentence, and glancing at Marie, who, having put away her wraps, was flying through the hall to the kitchen.

Marie had on a pretty little red marino dress, and a lace cap which Veronica had purchased for her was set jauntily on the top of her pretty brown head; her cheeks were flushed because she had stood over the stove, and in Veronica's eyes she looked dangerously beautiful tonight in her youth and joy and innocence. This thought when Marie opened the door gave her a little stab that brought the color to her own cheeks.

Her husband went up to her and kissed her affectionately. "Of course, I notice that you are not here. All I meant was that Marie makes things comfortable and pleasant and I don't want you to worry."

"No one," answered Veronica coldly, "could make it pleasant for me if you were not here."

Her husband, who was lighting a cigarette, turned with the lighted match still in his fingers and looked at her.

"Why, Veronica," he exclaimed, "how seriously you speak!"

"There are occasions," said Veronica a little hotly, "when one feels serious."

"But you and I," he replied, tossing the match aside and smiling, "are not much given to those occasions."

"I am, oftener than you imagine," returned Veronica, who was putting some white carnations in a vase.

Her husband laughed outright. "Oh, your seriousness!" he exclaimed.

She turned to him with a quick movement, and he noticed that the color had left her face. "I wish, dear," she said petulantly, "you would not always treat me as a joke."

"A joke? Why, Veronica, what are you talking about?"

"Oh, nothing," she returned lightly.

"But it is something!"

"Well, it isn't very pleasant for a

wife to almost break her neck to get back to her husband and have him assure her that he is perfectly happy at home without her, is it?"

"But I never said anything of the kind," he replied, staring at her amazed.

"You *did* say so," said Veronica, whose own words had excited her; "you said so only a few moments ago!"

They were facing each other, and at this moment Marie, who was getting ready to serve dinner, rushed in and, turning the switch, flooded the room with light.

"I said I don't wish you to worry if you were not in to receive me," said her husband as the girl flew out.

"And what *else* did you say?" asked Veronica, glancing at the door through which Marie had sped.

"*Nothing* else," emphasized Mr. Giruad.

"Oh!" sneered Veronica.

"Veronica," he asked, approaching her, "what do you mean?"

"Didn't you give the *reason* why you didn't wish me to worry?"

"I certainly did not that I remember, and I haven't the faintest idea what you are getting at?"

"Didn't you say it was because Marie chatted with you and made things so pleasant?"

Her husband continued to stare at her for a few moments, and when he opened his lips to speak she interrupted him with vehemence. "Oh, you needn't deny it—you *did* say it. Not," she added with a shrug, "that it was any news to me! I've seen for quite a while that you prefer talking French to Marie rather than English to me. Sometimes I've actually felt quite in the way; but then as I can't understand half the time a word that either of you say, I haven't actually realized before that it would be a relief to you not to have me here when you arrive."

Gradually as she spoke a look of anger had been gathering in the man's face, and with it was combined amazement and alarm. He went up and grasped her almost roughly, but the next moment released her and got pos-

session of himself. A rather nervous laugh broke from him. "Surely, my love," he said, "you don't want me to take seriously what you have said; you don't expect me to understand that you are jealous of little Marie?"

He peered hard into her colorless face, that flushed scarlet under his gaze.

"And why not?" she asked nervously. "She's a woman, isn't she?"

"No," he returned coldly, "she's a child, an innocent child; and besides, she's our servant."

At this moment Marie, whose manners were certainly explosive, threw open the door. Her face was beaming and even more flushed from her efforts. She bowed low and opened wide her arms. "*Madame*," she said, "*diner est servi!*"

Such a change came over the apartment after that evening when the dinner was eaten in silence and Marie had looked in vain from one to the other of her employers for a smile! It was as though the lights had all been turned off and only feeble flames could be induced to shine. Nothing was said, but all felt the difference.

Nothing went on as before. If Mr. Giruad arrived and was informed by the elevator-boy that his wife was still out he waited downstairs or walked up and down the sidewalk, and then they entered together so seriously that Marie looked at them, half afraid, and retired quickly to her little kitchen. Once or twice she served the dinner with eyes red from weeping, and Veronica had surprised her on several occasions crying at her work; but she neither questioned her as to the cause nor attempted to console her.

"*Madame ne m'aime pas*," the girl once said to her with streaming eyes, but Veronica had answered a little petulantly, "*C'est absurde, Marie je vous aime comme toujours.*" She knew well, nevertheless, that her words did not go home.

Marie worked as before, even harder, perhaps, and nothing unkind was said to her. In fact, Veronica was gentler than ever. She paid more

for Marie's caps, and bought her a pair of gloves and a pocketbook. But the little Gasconne, after expressing her appreciation, laid the things away sadly and went on wearing the simple caps that were dear to her because she had been so happy when they were presented to her.

Several times she dared question Veronica. Was madame ill—had madame had bad news? She knew how it would be with her if she were to hear that her grandmother was ill; she would be so unhappy that she could smile on no one. Perhaps madame—and Marie's face brightened—also had a grandmother who was not well, and madame was unhappy. To all of which Veronica said little, and finally one morning Marie summoned enough courage to follow Mr. Giruad to the elevator.

"*Mais monsieur*," she pleaded with her hand over the button, "*pourquoi tout le monde est si triste?*"

But fearing his wife, Mr. Giruad replied to her sharply and told her to return to her duties. The girl turned from him with a wounded look in her eyes—the look of an unjustly punished animal—that stabbed him uncomfortably.

That day, when she was assisting Veronica with her boots, Marie lifted one foot in her hand and pressed her lips to it while tears gushed to her eyes anew. But Veronica, with that jealousy which is crueler than the grave, made no response.

She had in her mind but one thought—how to get rid of the girl, and for her injustice she sought to find excuses. The home was hers, why have in it what caused her to be harassed? After all, was she responsible for Marie? Certainly no one could hold her so—Marie had run away from home and must look out for herself or stand the consequences. She was very fortunate to have found such a place on her arrival. She should accept it as an apprenticeship that had prepared her to get along. Why should she keep a servant who did not suit her? Why, if Marie was a relative or a sister



she could not be considering so seriously her duty to her. It was all nonsense. She would give Marie notice, make a change, and that was all there was to it.

But actually to take this final step was a difficult thing to do. Every praiseworthy act of the girl became a reproach to her. She began to resent Marie's faultless attention to her duties, which left her no excuse for dismissing her. If only she would neglect something, burn something, put a soiled dish on the table, fail to polish the silver, leave dust in the corners, anything that might give her the opportunity to open an attack! But the girl neglected nothing; everything shone, everything was on time, nothing was forgotten, nothing omitted. When Veronica would take out her shoes hoping to find the mud on them of the day before, they would shine in her eyes and irritate her so that she would throw them from her in disgust. It seemed to her sometimes that if she continued to see the little body bent over its work or the small hands never at rest, it would drive her mad. If she happened to enter the kitchen when Marie was down on her hands and knees scrubbing the floor she would turn away with a feeling of helplessness that almost made her ill.

Weeks and weeks of this life went on. Marie had lost color and her form was not so plump, not quite so much like a little bird's. Mr. Giruad noticed this and his heart-strings tightened a bit. He looked over at his wife who was lying on a couch with a novel in her hand and marveled at feminine cruelty. Arouse a woman's jealousy, he thought, and death itself could not soften her heart. But he felt no less tenderly toward his wife. He realized that she was not herself; an unnatural mental condition had robbed her of brain as well as heart, and to discuss her injustice would be like discussing with a maniac his absurd actions. He pitied Marie from the bottom of his soul. So clear was the

whole situation to him and the suffering of the two women that he longed in some miraculous way to help them both.

Veronica noticed the little Gasconne's pallor with an entirely different feeling—a feeling of hope. She could make of it an excuse. The work was too hard for Marie; she had too much to do; it was breaking her down; she needed a stronger servant. Not once, but twenty times did she approach the girl or call her to her to tell her this, but her courage failed her at the last moment. A look into the trusting, yearning eyes and she was dumb. She would give some simple order and find when the girl was out of her presence that she was trembling violently.

But, as was inevitable, the day finally came when her courage did not forsake her. Marie, as had always been her custom, was helping Mr. Giruad on with his overcoat, and Veronica, whose eyes were upon them, fancied that a look passed between them. It may even have been so, for the man felt an intense pity for the poor girl who had manifested so much affection for them, who was in a strange country, handicapped by no knowledge of the language and who was making such a brave effort to get along. No other servant had ever performed her duties as had this inexperienced young girl whose pretty face, vivacity and poor little charms, such as they were, were proving her undoing. When he was outside the door Veronica listened until she heard the elevator descend. Then, all in a tremor, she nerved herself and called Marie to her.

Marie, who was washing the dishes, came forward wiping her hands on her blue-checked apron, which reached down to the bottom of her skirt.

"Marie," said Veronica in a voice that astonished herself by its harshness, "I wish to speak to you this morning."

"*Oui, madame*," said the girl, with eyes full of pathetic questioning fixed upon her.

And then in very poor French and in



as few words as possible Veronica told her. Once she had begun, the words fairly burst from her, and when she ceased to speak the two stood facing each other as though both had been struck dumb.

Marie's whole being changed. In an instant the young form seemed to grow into that of an old woman. Her eyes took one quick, reproachful sweep over the rooms that shone and were in perfect order, then like a cry came the words, "*Mais, madame—*"

But Veronica interrupted her. She knew what Marie would say: that her work was all done, that she was willing to go on doing the work, trying harder than ever to please; but Marie could not deny that the work was too much, that she was pale and growing thinner every day! She must get an easier place, and she, Veronica, must get a stronger woman. Veronica described the kind of woman she required, someone who was large and powerful, whom nothing could tire!

And all through this tirade the girl's "*Mais, madame,*" was like the heaving of great sighs.

Finally, when Marie did speak it was with a vehemence that frightened Veronica. So rapidly did the words pour forth from the girl that not even one experienced in her language could have understood her. And Veronica caught nothing of it all. She only knew that the girl was protesting and making her appeal—she could see that in the eyes that flashed and pleaded in turn, and in the changed expression of the childish mouth. To end it all she interrupted Marie and forbade her to utter another word. The look in her steel-like eyes silenced the girl.

Like one staggered by a great blow, she turned, a queer little figure in the long-checked apron, and mechanically went back to the kitchen.

Just as when she arrived the first day the sky was heavy with snow-clouds and a few flakes were falling. She stood in the centre of the floor staring a long while out the window. Then she walked slowly across the room and took her seat in her little rocker that Ve-

ronica in the old, happy days had put by the kitchen window for her. With her face buried in her hands she sat thus while the hours passed.

Sounds, the daily sounds of apartment life, were going on, but they made no impression on her until finally she heard Veronica go out and close the door. That she had not been called to assist at the toilet, that Veronica had changed her own boots, pinned her own veil, herself gotten out the coat and furs, all brought a realization that her duties were over. She felt overpowered, and a strange feeling like sudden death came over her. She thought she was suffocating and sprang to her feet. Then, flinging out her arms with a gasp as though to get her breath, she fell in a forlorn heap upon the floor, and burst into the unconsolable sobbing of a child.

Three years is not very long, and yet it is long enough for a happy, busy woman to forget a little servant who had been in her employ for a few months.

At first Veronica suffered a great deal over what she had done, but as time went by and she heard nothing of Marie she took it quite for granted that with her bright ways and industry the little Gasconne was getting along, and had long since forgotten her. She quite laughed aloud to herself over what she called her little tragedy, and easily convinced herself that the whole affair had been horribly exaggerated. One didn't have time to worry about servants who, as the whole world knew, were ungrateful wretches.

But this was all false reasoning on Veronica's part, and for a long time she was tormented by the consciousness of having done a cruel injustice to a fellow being. In her attempt to console herself she several times appealed to her husband, but upon the subject of Marie she found him unsympathetic. He said nothing, but the cold look in his eye disconcerted her, and finally the girl's name was never mentioned.

Only once had she heard of the little Gasconne. It was when, a few weeks after she had dismissed her, the hall-boy

told her that Marie had been to the apartment to see the superintendent, who was getting her a position, Veronica remembered that she had once or twice teased Marie for her interest in the handsome young agent, and the news did not affect her agreeably; in fact, it made her quite uncomfortable for several days. But all this was, as I have said, three years ago and quite forgotten by Veronica, whose life was running smoothly.

It was Christmas Eve and she was feeling particularly glad. Already she was beginning to receive gifts, and her own selections had seemed to her unusually happy. At the last moment, however, she remembered one little niece who had been remembered and forgotten and forgotten and remembered until at the last moment she was unprovided for. Phil must go out with her, in spite of his objection to the crowds, to get something—a little lamb or a tea-set—anything for the child.

In her heart Veronica was not sorry for the excuse. She liked the Christmas crowds, and so would Philip, she told her husband, if he would get into the spirit of it. The toy was bought and they turned into Broadway and joined the endless throng.

"How merry it all is!" Veronica cried. "Old Christmas is here again and we are loving each other just the same!"

"The world hasn't treated us badly, either," returned her husband in the same light-hearted vein.

"And," said Veronica, looking up radiantly, "the stars are shining and——"

"Well," said her husband, "the stars are shining and—I'm listening."

There was no reply, but he felt a sudden clutch on his arm.

He glanced down at his wife, and the look in her face shocked him. Her countenance was ashen and her eyes were fixed ahead of her in a terrified stare. His own gaze followed hers, and

there before them, sauntering slowly and approaching lazily, were two girls. One of them was a rather diminutive figure. She had on a large black hat extravagantly covered with white feathers and a red silk coat that reached to her feet.

The piquant face was both old and young. Powder and paint flared out upon it, and the long lashes that fringed the round, full eyes were covered with pomade. She was looking over her shoulder when Mr. Giruad caught sight of her smiling at someone who had passed her; but the next moment she turned, and as she swung into her lazy gait again he saw her sad face distinctly. She passed quite close to Veronica and himself, looking straight ahead.

For an entire block not a word was spoken between Veronica and her husband. It seemed to the woman that she suddenly lost track of her surroundings; the lights seemed to grow brighter and blind her, the horns became more frequent, and deafened and distracted her. Finally she gasped forth a girl's name. "Marie!" she said under her breath.

Giruad made no reply. And then Veronica repeated the word. "Marie," she said, and then over and over, "Marie!"

Finally she turned her white face up to her husband. "You recognized her?"

"Yes," he answered quietly.

There was silence again, and then she said in a hot, suppressed voice, "And you think I am to blame—you despise me? Say it, you despise me!"

"No, my dear," said her husband gently, "I am sorry for you."

Later he took her into a restaurant and ordered something to drink for her, and the people around them took Veronica for a drunken woman, for she pushed the glass from her and throwing herself forward upon the table, sobbed aloud.



# THE UNDERSTUDY

By Emma B. Kaufman

HE first saw her ahead of him in the little dark alley-way that led to the stage door.

Outside it was bitterly cold. Just, inside the passageway there burned a single gas-jet. In its sputtering light the doorkeeper was walking up and down.

Otis Hargrave nodded to him, and as he stuck his hands deep in the pockets of his fur-lined coat he caught a glimpse of the girl's profile. At once he saw that she was pretty, and then it became interesting to him to observe that she had on a thinnish jacket of the sort of black that one calls genteel.

"Is Miss Webberley here?" he heard her ask.

Now as Hargrave wanted to know that very thing himself he listened to the doorkeeper's reply.

"Been here half an hour," answered the man.

It seemed to Otis Hargrave that the girl sighed. Again he looked at her, and again he was interested. He waited till she had disappeared through a door at the end of the passageway, then as the doorkeeper walked towards him he nodded his head in her direction.

"Member of the company?" he asked.

"Sure; she's in the business," said the man with the air of one who could convey that he had had experience enough to disdain the silly sentimentality of calling it an art.

"New?"

"Oh, no."

"I never noticed her before."

"Well, she don't do no special acting—just has a small part. She's understudy for the lead."

"Oh, yes, of course—in case—" Hargrave dropped reflectively.

"Yes, in case she dies," supplied the doorkeeper with a grunt.

"Oh, I say!" cried Otis in shuddering protest.

"Well, of course she ain't going to," said the man reassuringly. "But that's what a understudy's for—sickness or death. Nothing short of one of them's going to give the girl a show."

"Um! Beastly idea! She's young, too."

"One steps down, t'other steps up," the man went on. "What I'm layin' for is to be ticket-taker. It's warm over that side of the house. If Mr. Sayres—er—well, leaves, I've got a show to get the job."

"Is there a chance of his leaving?"

"Well, he's been sick some."

"I say," said Hargrave, opening a heavy door at the end of the passageway, "it would get on my nerves to have a job about this place."

It was obvious that a job anywhere would have had a similar effect. One could see that just by a look at him. He fluttered his eyelids, he twitched his lips—as he wore no mustache this wasn't disguised—he was irritable, his color was bad, and he jumped at nothing. In this condition one can't blame him if he made diversion the object of his life. In search of it he was behind the scenes of the Comedy Theatre where the laws were very strict about excluding ordinary people.

But by their reading Hargrave was not ordinary. By his multi-millionaire father and the great family mansion he called home, he wasn't; by his famous forty horse-power machine and

the number of its fines for passing the speed limit, he wasn't; by his present expenditures and his future prospects, he wasn't. By the power of all these things he stood now in the middle of the stage facing a wall of curtain.

"Quarter! Quarter!"

Sammy, the call-boy, was making his rounds, knocking at the door of an occasional silent dressing-room to make sure that everyone was on hand.

"Mr. Wilson—Mr. Wilson—anybody seen Wilson?" he sang out.

Before the question could be answered there was a rush of steps across the stage. They came with such force that they almost knocked Otis Hargrave over.

Then a breathless voice cried, "Give me two seconds—just two—my little girl's frightfully ill—couldn't get away—gee whiz—" A door slammed behind him.

"What's the matter? Who's late? Who is it?" asked a chorus of voices.

"Wilson—that's all!" shouted someone.

Sammy crossed the stage with a smile on his face.

"I say, that's a shame!" cried Hargrave indignantly. "Hasn't that poor man got an understudy?"

Sammy threw back his shoulders and winked knowingly. "You bet your life he has! But his understudy ain't going to have a show—not so long as Wilson can hobble, not on your life! He always just makes it—depend on Wilson for that!"

"But if his little girl is so ill?" ventured Hargrave.

"Oh, that's nothing; she's just sick." Sammy threw back his shoulders again, hesitated a moment and then added, as though reluctantly: "You see, I—he's seen me rehearse, and"—Sammy pursed up his lips and winked again, "well, I might make a hit, see? You can't make a hit if you don't get the stage, see?"

Sammy disappeared into the wings, and Hargrave crossed to Miss Webberley's dressing-room.

"Beastly cold," he said, flinging off his coat there after he had properly

saluted her; how, has nothing whatever to do with this story—besides she had her make up on.

"Everything's wrong tonight," said Hargrave moodily.

Miss Webberley smiled at him in the looking-glass and evened her left cheek off with a hare's-foot. "Is it better now?" she asked.

"Oh, you're all right," said Otis, "warm and beautiful! But there was a girl that came in in front of me, with a little black jacket on—give you my word, it wasn't as thick as that gown of yours there."

"Really? Can't imagine—" Miss Webberley held Otis Hargrave's roses up to her lips and looked over them charmingly.

"No, of course you can't; but it does make me so deuced uncomfortable."

"Who was she?"

"Your understudy."

"Little Congreve? My, but she's an actress!" laughed Miss Webberley. "New part every few weeks—casts herself. This week—poor humble little creature in a thin black jacket."

"Oh, I say—I say—it's too cold for that! Blanche, you're heartless—"

"Curtain—curtain!" cried the voice of Sammy.

"Don't, Otis—don't distract me! O-o-tees—my entrance—"

Otis stood where he could see all hands working it up. Sammy cried, "Now then, boys—now then!" A shout burst forth, and Webberley straightened up in her chariot of gold as though it were the real thing and he didn't exist, while the anxious father, Wilson, held the stage in spite of everything. It was splendid to watch him, knowing what was inside of him.

"Those duffers out there," said Hargrave contemptuously to Sammy, "they only see what goes on before their eyes."

"You bet—that's acting! Whoop it up, boys! Now then—all together!"

As long as Webberley was on the stage she held Hargrave's eyes, but at her exit they wandered so insistently that he decided to follow her. He crossed to the other side and stood be-

hind her understudy. He remarked the fine line her hair made where it was drawn up from her neck. She put up her hand to smooth it and he was at once struck with the delicacy of the tapering fingers. He rather liked the long, thin lines of her figure, too. "She looks pathetic," he was thinking, when Miss Webberley returned to the stage with all that he had sworn he admired. He glanced from her to the girl. Unconsciously, he began to dress her up in Miss Webberley's clothes and to wonder how she would look in them.

"By Jove, it's uncanny, blowed if it isn't! Poor Webberley, poor Webberley! She doesn't seem to realize that all the time someone is waiting for something to happen to her." Otis Hargrave had forgotten himself for a moment. When he remembered he pulled down his vest, jerked his arms, shook his shoulders, and wondered how he would feel with someone watching for some accident to run him out.

"By Jove, it gets on my nerves, blowed if it doesn't!" he said, as the curtain rang down on the end of the act. The girl stepped back from the wings, and presently, presuming on the fact that everyone knew who he was, he spoke to her.

"Beastly draft here," he said.

"Yes, it is cold," she answered, with a pretty little shiver.

"Do you have to stand just here?"

"Well, it's the best place for watching—I'm understudying the lead, you know."

"Then you'll be the heroine some day," he said slowly.

"Oh, I don't know about that," answered the girl with what, to his ears, sounded like the echo of the sigh he had heard before in the passageway.

"And why not?"

"Why—I'll—she'll—that is, of course, one never has the chance—"

"Well, what's the use of you, then?"

"Oh, in case——"

"But if it never happens?"

"Oh, they must be prepared! You see, during a run anything might happen. Miss Webberley might meet with an accident—or—or——"

"Precisely," said Otis Hargrave; "that's what you're waiting for—those iron girders up there to fall and maim her! The curtain to crash down upon her head! A flame to burst from the footlights and set fire to her gown——"

The girl laughed as though he were joking.

"I mean it," Otis went on. "It gets on my nerves. Someone waiting around, don't you know, for you to hurt yourself! Oh, you're not to blame, but, by Jove! you can't help praying for it, you can't—I don't care what you say—you must——"

"Oh, no, no—I simply watch in case——"

"And hope!" insisted Otis. "Do they have them in all companies?" he asked after a moment.

"Understudies? Why, yes, of course. Generally, they have some small part, as I have. Perhaps you haven't recognized me as the house-keeper in the third act in a gray wig—Webberley's great scene?"

"Could you play her part if you were called upon?"

"Could I?" The tone of that was not to be mistaken.

"And you may never have a chance!" exclaimed Otis, noting the delicate tracery of veins in her forehead, and again the fascinating line of her golden hair on her white neck. "It gets on my nerves, I declare it does!" he muttered at the end of his inspection.

"Miss Webberley's good-hearted," he observed presently. "She might stop away some time and give you a chance."

"Oh, never," cried the girl, "never! And if she did it wouldn't be a compliment. If they ever give you a chance when you're an understudy, you're bad—whooping bad."

He was glad that at that moment a confusion of preparations separated them, for he was certain she would have added, "I—er—I might make a hit—you see; she's watched me rehearse."

The next time he saw her the lights and the lines of her hair were extinguished under a gray wig. She was



the housekeeper in a quiet gray dress, giving orders for a banquet to honor the heroine. Poor little housekeeper! Hargrave pictured the rebellion in her soul. He saw repression in every gesture. It was her duty to prepare for the coming of the leading lady, her duty to work up her entrance, her duty to assist nightly at its success.

"That girl gets on my nerves!" he exclaimed to Miss Webberley a few minutes later.

That might be interpreted two ways, but the leading lady saw only one.

"You don't fancy her," she answered. "Well, she's conscientious—always there."

"I should think she'd hoodoo you, waiting around for you to get sick or something."

"But I'm not going to," said Miss Webberley.

"Can she act?"

Miss Webberley made a deprecating gesture.

"Then you might—er—give her a show," drawled Otis with an assumption of great indifference.

Miss Webberley looked blank.

"As far as I'm concerned," she said, "it's absurd to pay her a salary, for I've never disappointed an audience in my life, and never mean to if I can help it. But the management insists upon having her in case— What was that, Celestine? Oh, yes, you want an answer to Mr. Rayburn's message? You may tell him I'll be delighted to go to supper with him. What did you say, Otis? Oh, but you understand I can't always go with you."

Otis understood.

After that Miss Webberley ignored her understudy absolutely, and Otis, recognizing his cue, tried to play up to it. He succeeded until one night along toward the last weeks of the season, when something happened that was not in the bill. It was in the second act. The scene set for that act included a narrow flight of carpeted steps used only by Webberley. She came down them, running, as usual, when presently something that wasn't usual happened. She tripped, almost

fell, caught herself and seemed suddenly to go lame. Under her paint you could see that she grew white. Otis Hargrave was in the front of the house, but he got behind as quickly as possible to find the air there full of witch-hazel, arnica, alcohol.

Miss Webberley's maid, Miss Webberley's press agent, and the Czar himself—which is the pet name they call the manager of the Comedy—were all bending over her. Finally, they cleared the way for a doctor. He got her to her dressing-room and went to work with massage, bandages, and whatever else one may bring to the care of a sprained ankle.

Otis was standing about murmuring his distress. The Czar was demanding an explanation, and those responsible were trying to give it.

"Can't imagine," they said.

"Most careful—yes, I looked at the carpet," cried Sammy, "ten minutes before she came on—always do—it was tight then—"

The Czar swore a mighty oath. "It might have been serious," he cried; "it might have laid her up!"

Otis Hargrave suddenly remembered the understudy, possibly because she stood before him. They were both just outside Miss Webberley's door.

"Do you think she'll be all right?" she asked nervously.

"Oh, yes, I think so," he answered. "You see, she's got Durham in there. He's the best in the world, you know; he happened to be in the house."

"Hasn't she luck!" exclaimed the understudy.

"Yes—yes, he'll have her on her feet!"

"And lots of grit!" cried the understudy.

Otis gasped. "Jove!" he said, "your chance is slipping away in there! I—I see—"

"Of course, I'm glad she's not hurt!" cried the girl.

"No—no—you just thought—I see it all—you—you—"

"Clear the stage—all right!" cried Sammy. Miss Webberley stepped out of her dressing-room and upon the scene,

with drawn lips and a trifle more rouge on her cheeks, to a burst of genuinely appreciative applause.

Miss Congreve watched from one wing, and Otis, standing in another, never took his eyes off her.

"You poor little disappointed woman," he was saying to himself. "If this accident had been serious you'd have gone on and taken her place. That's what you're thinking—that's what. Then what would happen? Ah! anything, everything might!

"You'd have your chance, anyway, and you'd have the advantage, too, of appearing to do the part without preparation. Those duffers out there, they don't know what's going on here! They don't know that you've thought of nothing else since you joined the company—when you were cleaning your gloves, packing your trunks, ironing your handkerchiefs on the looking-glasses. I know—I know— If something should happen to her! Then something happens! It sets your heart beating so that you fear the other will hear it. In your ears the applause of those duffers out there is already ringing. And then the chance slips by, leaving you with black despair in your heart. Day after day, you have stood waiting—ready in case—poor child, poor little woman, where will you end? It gets on my nerves—by Jove, it does." Otis jumped to his feet. "In the end that girl is bound to do something wicked—to commit a crime—unless—unless— By Jove, poor Webberley—poor Webberley."

The next performance was a matinee. Otis Hargrave came behind just after the curtain rang up. He seemed in one of his most nervous moods, restless as people usually are without reason. Miss Webberley attributed it to her accident of the night before.

"I'm limping," she assured him, "but I'm much better."

Otis had scarcely sat down when he was up again.

"I just stepped in to see how you were," he said. "I'm going now to get something to eat."

"Oh, wait for me, do——"

"I can't—too hungry."

"O—tees——"

"Can't——"

"There's my feast for the banquet scene—beautiful bread and milk—eat that, please," said Miss Webberley, "to show you love me!"

"Well, for that— Where is it?"

"Just around there behind that curtain—you'll find the table set. Go get it—Otis, the rouge is all off my cheek. Only leave me a spoonful to play with."

Otis went off in search of the banquet. On top of a great horseshoe table he found it—rubber grapes, papier maché apples, and at Webberley's place real bread and milk.

He poured out a cup of the milk, and just as he raised it to his lips someone said, "Good afternoon."

"Ah, Miss Congreve!"

"Don't," she cried with great concern. "You'll spoil Webberley's business."

"But she told me to, she—" Suddenly Hargrave paused and looked at the girl straight in the eyes. His hand trembled, but he raised the cup again to his lips.

"Oh, why do you take that stuff?" she cried quickly.

"Why? Simply because I'm hungry."

"I know, but you—oh, don't—stage milk—why, it's poison——"

The cup dropped from Hargrave's hand with a crash. There was a noise behind them, Sammy warning them it was time to disappear.

"Here," cried Otis, "get out of the road." He pushed the understudy to one side, and dashing to a window emptied out the rest of the milk.

"What are you doing?" she cried, following him.

To his excited vision she seemed to have gone white to the lips. "Go," he whispered, "go!" Miss Congreve moved away as if in a daze, crushed, it seemed to him, and thoroughly frightened.

Hargrave turned back and confronted Sammy. "Here—here's water for Miss Webberley," he gasped. "I upset all the milk."

"Quick, out of the way! Lightning change here," cried Sammy. All about ensued a tremendous commotion, and in an instant of darkness Otis Hargrave sank limp against the roof of a house.

It was seven-thirty of a certain evening that Webberley and some others will never forget as long as they live. The Comedy company gathered slowly in their dressing-rooms.

Into one a girl came panting and turning over the leaves of a play-book.

"Hello, Connie, what's up?" asked a stout, gray-haired woman adjusting a blond wig that was to transform her into youth.

"Oh, Webberley hasn't come," cried the girl, "and they want me to get my make-up on in case——"

The other laughed. "Oh, she'll be here—don't you worry. I've seen you make up before on the chance."

Meanwhile the girl was ripping off her jacket. The other looked at her contemptuously for a moment. "Well, I wouldn't perspire over it," she dropped. "Seen the Czar?"

"Well, I guess! He's all over the place, growling, and cutting off heads. Better not go out!" Miss Congreve balanced her book against a candlestick.

"Do you actually think Webberley's going to give you a chance? Blanche Webberley? Not if she has to crawl here on her hands and knees!"

"It's serious, Jacky! The last seen of her was with Otis Hargrave in his new machine!"

"Oh, that man Hargrave!"

"Imagine any woman trusting herself out with that!"

"O-o-tees——" Jacky dropped her blond wig to give an imitation of Webberley.

"You ought to have seen him the other night! Acted as though he were stark staring mad——"

"Over you?"

"Over some milk—Webberley's. He was about to drink it, and I—well, he'd been sort of nice to me and I thought I'd show some interest in him by way of——"

"By way of making Blanche jealous. Well, go on——" Miss Congreve was absorbed in forming a curve of her upper lip. "Go on——"

"Oh, yes. 'Don't,' I said——"

"I know, with your soul in your eyes."

"And lo and behold, he dropped the cup—smashed it to smithereens—and cried out to me like Hamlet to 'Phelie, 'Go—go—go——'"

"Nerves, my dear, nerves! Nerves will do anything."

"I'm beginning to get the creeps myself," cried the girl, rebalancing the book and spouting:

"Let them come! Let them all come! I don't care, I don't care! To their faces I'll say what I think of you, —of you——"

"No more legit for me!" interrupted Jacky. "Me—vaudeville! Wouldn't I? Well, wait till next season. Nothing in the legitimate unless you have a pull. Look at me—five lines and a quarter——"

"But talent——"

"Talent—nothing! What does the public know about talent? Bah, not that!" Jacky snapped her fingers as though she had a row of noses before her. "The public? They can only judge of what they see, and they can see only what's given them. Eh? Their judgment is in the hands of a few men—you can count them on your fingers. They say, 'Here—that's all you get this season—take it or leave it!' Bah! You can't appear without them, can you? So there you are—wasted—like me——"

"But one of them may——"

"Yes, and Webberley may!" On the infinite doubt of this a commotion seemed to break from the outside. "Ah, there she is now! What did I tell you?—Hope on—hope ever!—You'll learn some day——"

Miss Congreve peeped out of the door.

The air was charged with the name of Webberley. It clanged over the phones. It was in the passageways and the dressing-rooms. Messenger boys were scattering with it in every direction.

"Orchestra! Orchestra!"

Someone said, "My God," and someone else "The devil." On this occasion they meant the same thing. Webberley had disappeared! Webberley the reliable—Webberley, the unfailing—Webberley whom the bills announced for that night at 8.15.

Behind the scenes those who could tell anything of her movements were all important.

Her maid had dressed her at four for a promenade in the automobile of Monsieur Hargrave. "*Oui—oui*—there was no doubt of that." Someone else had seen Hargrave's machine with her in it. That was at six.

Meanwhile, little Congreve with trembling hands was putting on more and more make-up. Assisted by Jacky and Miss Webberley's maid, she was finally putting on Webberley's clothes.

"I say, you're in luck. It's the chance of your life. Keep your wits." These things were murmured in Miss Congreve's ear. The blood surged through her body.

Sammy gave a push to the leading lady's chariot of gold, and the understudy had the stage.

It was after ten when Otis Hargrave's motor car whizzed into town. Miss Webberley sat very straight, and seemed to be thinking very hard. Otis was murmuring, "Those darned tires—you never can tell how they'll behave—beastly business—it's all my fault—it never happened before—forgive me——"

Meanwhile, they were nearing the theatre.

"It's actually lit up," gasped Miss Webberley. "Open, as though nothing had happened."

"Come now—what do you care if the little understudy has had her chance? What do you care?" ventured Otis. "She can't possibly—er—possibly—you say she can't act——"

Suddenly Miss Webberley grasped his arm. "I've an idea," she cried, "an idea! Now before we say one word to the reporters——"

"Reporters!" gasped Otis.

"You don't suppose I could disap-

pear without comment! I—Blanche Webberley! They'll be all over the place—waiting for a story. God knows what the Czar's told them. Quick—let's slip out up here and walk around to the office entrance. There, wait here," she cried, thrusting him into a dark corner, "while I see the Czar."

Otis kicked his heels for twenty minutes, and thought his thoughts. Presently Miss Webberley emerged—smiling. Behind her came the Czar—smiling.

"Great woman, great!" he repeated several times.

Miss Webberley turned to Otis. "Now," she said, "live up to me. It's an advertisement—a fine one——"

"For whom?" he blurted out.

"Why, great heaven, she has a three years' contract!" cried the Czar.

"For whom do you suppose?" cried Webberley.

"But didn't your understudy appear?" asked Otis.

"Of course—of course——"

"And how did she do?" Otis felt he must know.

"Oh, very well; she made a hit," said the Czar, still smiling.

Miss Webberley held herself in perfect control. "Now, Otis, listen," she said slowly. "Much depends upon you." Otis straightened up, almost to fall over the next minute. "Miss Congreve appeared through my clemency, do you see? I got out of the way deliberately, to give her a chance. Now, Otis, remember, not a word about broken tires, or those three terrible hours in the wilderness before you got another machine. Remember—I got out of the way deliberately in order to give her a chance. I wanted to lay off that night when I sprained my ankle, but the management insisted upon my limping through my part as best I could——"

"Go light on that," interrupted the Czar.

"I couldn't get sick, and I couldn't just step out of the cast—and yet there was the poor little girl, always before my eyes, longing, hoping for a chance.

You can put in something there about my never having disappointed an audience," said Miss Webberley, turning to the Czar. Then in her stage voice she resumed, "At last the girl got on my nerves——"

"That's mine," muttered Otis.

"Touched my heart—that's better," corrected Miss Webberley. "'Why not give her a chance?' I said to myself. How could it possibly interfere with me? You can put in something there about my playing night after night to crowded houses——"

"Fine!" cried the Czar, applauding. "Fine!"

"Now, Otis, this is where you come in! I said to you, 'Run me out of town! Run me out of town!' See? You were the tool, Otis—see?"

"Yes, I see," said Otis. What else could he say?

"Now, be sure to play up to me!"

"Yes—yes——" What else could he do even though it had been borne in upon him that when the leading lady voluntarily gives her understudy a chance she's bad—whooping bad?

The noise of a moving crowd broke upon her ears.

"It's the end of the play," said the Czar to Miss Webberley. "You'd better get behind quickly if you want to offer congratulations. I'll see the reporters and tell them the details. We can depend upon you, Mr. Hargrave," he added as he held a door.

"Surely—surely—I owe her that—God knows I do," said Otis.

"Then come around tomorrow night, and do your best to bear me out! I'll go it alone now," cried Miss Webberley.

The little story in the papers the next morning made quite a sensation, particularly behind the scenes of the Comedy. Hargrave was interviewed several times during the day, and by night he wasn't sure whether he was a hero or a fool. His nerves, it may be, had something to do with the uncertain state of his mind.

His visit to the theatre that night didn't tend to steady them, either. In

the first place, it seemed to him that Miss Webberley, though he had certainly acted up to her nobly, greeted him with noticeable coolness. So noticeable was it that he decided to congratulate her understudy.

She had a large bunch of roses and a chair in the wings, and someone else was cast for the old housekeeper.

"So the understudy did get a chance!" he said with as much enthusiasm as he could express under his breath.

"Oh, yes," answered the girl, turning calm eyes upon him. "Miss Webberley has perhaps told you," she added languidly, "that I'm leaving the end of the week to head Number Two."

"Ah, good! I congratulate you," said Otis, with real pleasure. "You had a long wait, but——"

"Talent always gets there in the end," observed the girl contentedly.

Otis eyed her narrowly. "Fine woman, Miss Webberley," he remarked, at the end of his inspection.

The girl did not seem to be listening. Then she drawled, "When I'm playing leads I shall never trust myself to an automobile."

"Will you have an understudy?" asked Otis, anxious to change the subject.

"Oh, one has to have that in case——"

"Poor understudy," said Otis, smiling upon her as upon one who would understand.

"It's a great chance," she remarked.

"Beg pardon——"

"I began that way," said Miss Congreve quite complacently.

She might perhaps have added something else, but Miss Webberley was smiling at her from across the stage. She threw her a kiss. Miss Congreve returned it. Hargrave realized that they were only living up to their parts, both of them. But he felt out of the cast somehow and so, unobserved, he stole forth into the night, alone—probably in search of another.



# LA REVANCHE

Par Ginét Sicaud

**S**YBIL, d'un effort lent, tourna vers l'arrivant son visage aminci.

Les angles accusés, le teint d'ivoire, les joues creuses, en faisaient un visage cruellement vieilli, si l'on se reportait au délicieux portrait médaillé ~~aux~~ beaux-arts la saison précédente, et dans les coussins flous dont les tons se mêlaient aux roses transparentes du luxueux peignoir garni de zibeline, la ruine du corps—du jeune corps pétri d'une argile si tendre—semblait irrémédiable. . . . Rien des langueurs savantes, de la grâce un peu mièvre et cherchée de jadis en cette forme lasse. Les doigts ployaient sous les bagues précieuses comme le front sous les cheveux trop lourds. Et ces cheveux, d'un fauve de couchant, la seule chose échappée au désastre.

—Ary vraiment! . . .

—Vraiment, chère madame!

Il s'approchait, saisi, malgré son flegme, de cette voix changée, comme lointaine. Était-ce bien la voix pressante qui murmurait naguère des mots ensorceleurs?

—Pour un docteur, c'est tout à fait aimable! Six mois d'absence pendant lesquels malades et amis peuvent mourir vingt fois sans qu'il en ait souci. . . D'où sortez-vous?

Il serra posément la main tendue, choisit un siège, le poussa devant la chaise longue, et répondit:

—Je sors d'Alexandrie. . . Comment va George?

—George n'a pas été malade, que je sache. . . .

Elle hésita, puis reprit, maîtrisant une inquiétude vague:

—Pour moi, j'ai traversé, pendant

que vous erriez aux bords du Nil, une crise assez forte. . . qui m'oblige au repos. . . Je vous raconterai. . .

Elle attendit un mot qu'il ne prononça pas, et s'arrêta, les yeux plongés fixement dans les siens. Que pensait-il? Voilà six mois qu'il voyageait sans avoir une fois donné de ses nouvelles, et, au retour c'était de George qu'il s'informait d'abord. Son état lamentable, à elle, ne l'impressionnait pas. Il était là, toujours le même, correct et beau garçon, la taille droite, le front haut, la face impénétrable avec son froid sourire aiguisé d'ironie. Quel homme était-ce pour oublier si vite, quand d'autres avaient fui vainement le danger, emportant avec eux le souvenir tenace des courts instants vécus près d'elle?

—Mon pauvre Ary, vous n'imaginiez guère me retrouver ainsi?

—Je n'imaginai pas. . j'étais certain.

Elle eut un haut-le-corps, méfiante soudain, presque agressive.

—Parceque? . . .

—Oh! parceque je vous connais tout simplement. Parce que je connais vos procédés, votre tempérament, le résultat possible de certaines folies. Je dirais quelles phases vous ont conduite à celle-ci. . . quelle sphase suivront. . . . C'est enfantin!

Elle railla:

—Quelles sont donc ces phases. . . puisqu'on vous a si bien mis au courant?

—Mais celles ordinaires à tout morphinomane, chère amie. Ni plus, ni moins. On ne m'a pas mis au courant. Je vois. Les signes sont les mêmes pour tous, comme la pente. . . Vous vous faisiez piquer lorsque je suis parti. Vous avez continué. C'est naturel. On commence par deux, trois piqûres

par jour, on arrive à quarante. D'un centigramme de morphine on passe à quatre-vingts...

Elle l'interrompt.

—Et puis, après! Qu'est-ce que cela prouve?

—Cela prouve?... Mais rien. Vous connaissez l'histoire des fumeurs d'opium? On est intoxiqué jusqu'à la moelle et l'on s'éteint dans la folie ou le gâtisme... Rien de plus.

Elle eut un rire bref.

—Soit! Je m'éteindrai donc en fumeur d'opium. Cette fin ou une autre. Aussi bien, je ne puis, ni ne veux, recommencer des luttes inutiles. A ce jeu-là, vous l'avez dit, la partie engagée, on continue, quoiqu'il arrive. J'ai crié de souffrance, et j'ai continué. J'ai vu ma chair se fondre, ma beauté s'altérer, et j'ai continué. Je ne suis pas à l'heure où l'on s'arrête.

Elle tâcha de lire plus avant dans ses yeux. Les siens, maintenant, flamboyèrent, lucides et farouches.

—Mon excuse est d'avoir pu ignorer cela, moi, au début... Mais vous, vous médecin, comment l'ignoriez-vous?... Pourquoi m'avez-vous laissé faire? Ah! vous me connaissiez... Et, de gaieté de cœur, vous me lanciez vous-même sur la pente? Et, sans protestation, pour de bénignes névralgies, vous me faisiez des ordonnances de morphine? Et vous dressiez Mariette à me piquer?... Mariette! Vous parti, un docteur n'eût jamais consenti à pareil crime! Une femme de chambre, cela consent toujours, lorsqu'on y met le prix...

Sa voix durcit, haineuse tout à coup, lasse de feindre.

—Prenez donc garde, Ary... Se venger d'une est lâche. Il est des choses que la passion n'excuse pas!

Il sourit doucement.

—Je ne suis pas homme à vengeance, chère amie. Je vous aurais aimée comme vous l'entendez, que, même repoussé, martyrisé, trahi, je me serais cru au-dessus de toutes représailles.

—Alors, pourquoi?

—Pourquoi j'ai "laissé faire"?

Il réfléchit une seconde et continua:

—Vous désirez la vérité? Je vous la dois. Je n'ai pas empêché votre sui-

cide, parce qu'il est des êtres qu'on ne peut sauver sans en condamner d'autres. Ce sont des êtres inconsciemment néfastes, dont l'existence est un danger pour ceux qui les approchent. Lorsqu'on rencontre une bête nuisible, —vipère inconsciente ou non de son venin, chien enragé, fauve affamé, insectes offensifs—on les tue sans procès. Pour les bêtes humaines, il faut—sauf dans les cas de guerre—d'autres formalités. J'entends lorsque leur mal-faisance s'exerce hors la loi, ce qui arrive. Pour vous, je n'avais ni le droit, ni la charge, de vous traiter en fauve. Mais, quoique médecin, et par là responsable des conséquences de mon acte, je n'ai pas cru devoir vous empêcher de vous réduire—vous-même—à l'impuissance. Vous m'avez dit, un jour: "Est-ce ma faute si l'on s'éprend de moi? Ai-je fait ma beauté?" Non, sans doute, pas plus votre beauté si troublante et perverse, que votre petite âme, perverse et troublante aussi, comme une eau limoneuse parée d'exquises fleurs. Au dehors, le mensonge d'un radieux printemps. Au fond, toute la vase, tous les rêves malsains d'un esprit corrompu. D'où sortiez-vous cette corruption avec cette visage?

Lorsque je vous ai vue pour la première fois—vous portiez la toilette en crêpe virginal de votre grand portrait—vous étiez mariée depuis trois mois à peine, et je me souviens bien du sourire ingénu dont vous grisiez déjà de nombreux soupirants. George était fier de vous, de vos succès. Pauvre garçon! Dix jours après, le jeu de séduction qui l'avait affolé, mis à vos pieds, livré sans phrases, recommençait pour moi—pour moi, le camarade, le commensal, presque l'enfant de la maison, et je manquais trahir—pour ce même sourire—le plus cher des amis—Oh! j'ai eu peur, je le confesse. Votre charme est de ceux, étrangement subtils, enveloppants comme un effluve magnétique, dont on ne songe pas à se défendre. Plus redoutable que les passionnées, les impulsives, qui se découvrent elles-mêmes, vous aviez cette science des fausses amoureuses

qui, habituant leur corps aux gestes de l'amour sans en connaître le frisson, trouvent un plaisir âpre aux sensations d'autrui. Vous traversiez le feu sans vous bruler et regardiez comment font ceux qui brûlent—

George a été la première victime. Il avait ce malheur de vous aimer en mari un peu jeune, trop ardent et jaloux, c'est-à-dire en mari destiné à souffrir les pires des souffrances. Je ne vous en veux pas d'avoir brisé sa vie. C'était logique. Mais d'autres ont passé, qui ne vous cherchaient pas, qui avaient une femme, un foyer, des joies calmes, et vous les avez pris, détournés de leur voie, sans un scrupule. Des scrupules, pourquoi? N'étiez-vous pas certaine, vous d'éviter la chute, de rester jusqu'au bout—quand même—honnête femme? Pousser le flirt aux extrêmes limites vous amusait. Franchir le pas, commettre l'acte inélégant, banal—et dangereux—. Ce n'était plus cela.

Je me suis demandé, parfois, la raffinée, l'invraisemblable Messaline que vous auriez donnée, si votre chair avait une fois tressailli sous les caresses! Mais vous étiez—quelle ironie!—physiquement une impassible. Et quand votre mari guettait jalousement les autres mâles, vous ne compreniez pas. Lorsque le petit Fridgge, avec ses dix-huit ans, sa foi naïve d'enfant tendre, vint s'abattre en pleurant dans votre robe, vous ne comprîtes pas, non plus. Et pour ne pas lui avoir dit: "Va-t'en. Je ne suis pas celle que tu supposes. Je ne puis rien pour toi, que te faire du mal," l'enfant c'est tué. Rappelez-vous, Sybil. C'était un cœur fragile. Un doux cœur de poète plein de rêves. L'avenir, devant lui, s'ouvrait sans lutte. Et vous avez fauché cela... Quand je vous ai appris la tragique nouvelle, vous avez eu la moue d'une petite fille dont la poupée vient d'être mise en miettes. "Oh! quel dommage!" Et vous avez pensé que c'était ennuyeux d'avoir cassé un jouet neuf.

Ary songea une seconde. Livide, en ses coussins, les poings crispés, Sybil n'écoutait plus. Et un cri de révolte, de fureur éperdue lui échappa.

—Oh! c'est lâche, c'est lâche!... Vous osez me parler d'honnête femme! Et l'honnête homme, qu'est-ce? Est-ce le médecin qui tue, l'ami faillible qui s'érige en vengeur d'imaginaires fautes? Ah! vous préparez l'arme, et vous vous en allez, après, tranquillement, sachant *comment cela se passera*... Mais je ne suis pas morte! Et je me sauverai, malgré vous, malgré tous! Vous avez, Dieu merci, parlé trop vite. J'ai pour moi la jeunesse, et j'y saurai trouver la force de guérir, d'être plus désirable, plus aimée qu'autrefois! Je vous ferai souffrir, je vous torturerai... Cela seul vaut la peine de gagner la partie... C'est la dernière, prenez garde!

Elles'était dressée hors delachaise longue et chancelait dans sa robe trop large.

—Recouchez-vous, dit simplement Ary, vous sentez bien que ce sont là des phrases inutiles. Vous ne pourrez lutter, parce que vous aimez ce qui vous tue. Vous aimez, vous, pour la première fois—vous, l'impassible, vous, la forte!—Vous aimez votre mal comme l'ivrogne aime l'alcool, comme l'amante aime l'amant qui lui a ouvert le Paradis... Vous l'aimez pour lui-même, pour les sensations que vous cherchiez en vain dans le cœur, dans les nerfs, dans le spasme des autres et qu'il vous a données, lui, par hasard, qu'il vous redonnera lorsque vous le voudrez. La passion que vous n'attendiez plus, deux gouttes de poison l'ont éveillée... Elle vous tient, elle vous mate... C'est elle qui, à son tour, vengera Fridgge.

Il se leva, l'aida courtoisement à se rasseoir. Mais, l'écartant soudain, glacée, les yeux hagards, elle tourna la tête et s'effondra en le flot roux de ses cheveux, sanglotant à sanglots désespérés.

—Vlan! la crise de nerfs! murmura-t-il.

Se dirigeant vers l'antichambre, il ouvrit une porte et dit:

—Mariette, venez près de Madame qui a sa crise. Vous la surveillerez. Si cela durait trop, vous me retrouveriez dans le bureau de M. George. Pour la morphine, je permets aujourd'hui le nombre de piqûres que Madame voudra...

# THE UNDOING OF MRS. DERWALL

By H. G. Dwight

“**M**RS. HOPP, ma'am,” announced the maid [at the door.

“Mrs. Hopp?” repeated Mrs. Derwall inquiringly. “All right. You can show her up here.” And after the maid had vanished: “I wonder what Julie Hopp wants now. People are so funny. The ones you like are as scarce as auks’ eggs, while the ones who like you——”

But at that moment Mrs. Hopp somewhat prematurely appeared. Mrs. Derwall rose to meet her with outstretched hands. “My dear, what grandeur! You must be out for a campaign.”

“I am, Sophie dear,” responded the lady addressed, with an effusive embrace, “and I want you to join it. Hurry up and put your hat on.”

“If that were all I had to put on! And here you have been prinking since five o’clock in the morning. What in the world are you up to now?”

“Well,” replied Mrs. Hopp, “I’m going in to town on the ten-twenty to begin with. And then I’m going to lunch somewhere, and then I’m going shopping——”

Mrs. Derwall began to shake her head.

“No use to come here, Julie. It’s too soon after Christmas, and I’m on my June allowance now. I sha’n’t be able to stir out of the house this year—except when Lou happens to feel a little kindly disposed.”

The melancholy tone of this declaration caused Mrs. Hopp to smile; for the unblushing subservience of the gentleman in question was no secret to the world at large.

“Well, I’ll trust Lou! But the shopping is the least of it—if you’d only let me finish what I want to say. I’ve got a treat for you.”

“Oh!” exclaimed Mrs. Derwall. “A surprise?”

“Yes. Guess what it is.”

“A matinee?”

“Something like it, only nicer. Not that everybody would think so; but people who know enough would. You will.” And Mrs. Hopp beamed upon her friend with an expression on which the freemasonry of the truly superior outdid the archness of her who would excite curiosity.

As it happened, this was an expression which never had a propitious effect upon Mrs. Derwall.

“Julie, you are so—mystifying,” she plaintively said. But she evinced so small a disposition to penetrate the mystery that her friend was compelled to resume her tactics.

“It’s not just one of those silly plays, with a pretty boy to play it,” she uttered solemnly. “It’s really literary, Sophie.”

“Oh, my!” exclaimed Mrs. Derwall with mediocre enthusiasm. “What have I done, Julie, to deserve this?”

“You don’t look as if you believed me, Sophie,” protested Mrs. Hopp. “But just you wait. It’s Professor Murch’s first lecture—Professor Richard Murch, you know. He’s going to give a course on Browning and the Higher Life.”

“Oh, is he?” The triumph with which Mrs. Hopp had delivered herself of her momentous intelligence was only equaled by the passivity with which her interlocutress received it.

There ensued a brief pause, during which the two ladies studied each other. Then Mrs. Derwall suddenly realized that it was incumbent upon her to make some acknowledgment of her friend's courtesy.

"It's awfully sweet of you, Julie. But I don't know where you get the idea that I'm literary. I'm not a bit, you know—or poetical, either. And as for the Higher Life—why, really, Julie, life in the suburbs is high enough for me. I think you ought to take somebody who could appreciate it better. There's Miss Higginson, for instance."

"Miss Higginson!" burst out Mrs. Hopp. "I don't want Miss Higginson, Sophie; I want you. And you needn't tell me you don't care for such things. I know you better. You are too modest. And if you could *hear* that man—the things he says——!"

Mrs. Derwall sat up very straight.

"H'm, my dear! No, thank you. I might swallow Browning, perhaps; but I can't swallow Professor Lurch——"

"Murch, Sophie."

"Murch, then, on top of him. *There* I draw the line."

Mrs. Hopp looked a little agitated.

"What do you mean, Sophie? Do you—do you, perhaps, know anything against him?"

"Yes, I do," declared Mrs. Derwall.

"What?" inquired Mrs. Hopp with hesitation. "Is it anything I should know?"

"Indeed it is, my dear! But if you haven't found it out yet you never will," replied Mrs. Derwall with more emphasis than tact.

"What?" asked Mrs. Hopp again. "I wouldn't want to be countenancing anything, you know."

"Well," put forth Mrs. Derwall oracularly, "any man who spends his time talking to women is a fool. I don't care what he talks about."

Mrs. Hopp stared at her friend with a dumb amazement in which there was something of expectation unfulfilled. At last, however, she found words of protest.

"But, Sophie—aren't you a woman yourself?"

"I'm sorry to say I am," admitted Mrs. Derwall, without hedging. "And I'm heartily ashamed of it."

Mrs. Hopp was again lost in stupefaction. And then:

"Is it your idea, Sophie," she inquired a little distantly, "that we—that Professor Murch's friends make fools of themselves over him?"

"Since you ask, Julie love, I am obliged to confess that you divine my idea precisely."

"Sophie, you're horrid!" retorted Mrs. Hopp. "Men could go if they wanted to, but they're too busy—and too many other things. Don't you sometimes think, Sophie, that men are a little lacking in some things? That they are rather—coarse?" But a light in her companion's eye warned her back to relevancy. "Besides, he's married."

"All the worse!" briskly commented Mrs. Derwall, whose sex enabled her to follow the train of Mrs. Hopp's thought. "And I can be pretty sure that you've never seen his wife."

"It's perfectly true that I haven't," proclaimed Mrs. Hopp, unabashed. "But it's a case of 'unknown wives of famous men'—don't you know? She's probably nice enough, only the quiet sort that you don't get acquainted with easily. And perhaps"—Mrs. Hopp took on an air of high compassion—"not very congenial. You'd think that if she really cared for what her husband says she'd be more in evidence at his lectures."

Mrs. Derwall let herself go the length of a laugh.

"As if she didn't know them by heart! I guess she's sorry for the day she first let herself listen to them. She probably taught Perch——"

"Murch, Sophie."

"Murch, then, what an agreeable sensation it was to have ladies hang on his lips, and when she got tired of listening he tried it on the rest of you. Besides, if she were there it would spoil the whole business."

"Sophie, you're just as nasty as you can be!" cried Mrs. Hopp. "He needs the money. I know he does."



He looks so ill, too—so pale and thin. It makes your heart ache to see him. And when he reads 'James Lee's Wife'——"

Words failed her. As for Mrs. Derwall, she gave vent to a perceptible snort.

"Of course he looks pale! Anybody can look pale. You can look pale. I can look pale. How can he help looking pale if he eats all the luncheons you stuff him with? And if he looked red and fat do you suppose anybody would pay him to read love poems?"

Mrs. Hopp tossed her head.

"It's all very well for you to talk. But you haven't seen him, and I have. Besides, you haven't been through—things. If you knew what the world really is! If you knew, Sophie Derwall!" Mrs. Hopp, who was in receipt of comfortable alimony from a good-natured button manufacturer, darted upon her friend the meaning glances of one who has drained life's goblet to the lees. "No, some people are fated to make mistakes. And to pay for them, Sophie. I know Professor Murch is unhappy. If you could only hear how he talks about Mr. and Mrs. Browning——!"

Mrs. Derwall was able to contain herself no longer.

"Julie Hopp!" she burst out. "Never speak to me again of Mr. and Mrs. Browning! Never! never! never! I can't stand them. They were the two most colossal bores of the nineteenth century!"

The lady addressed was at first too horrified for words. Then dignity and scorn supported her like caryatides on either hand. Which spectacle, it must be said in passing, restored to Mrs. Derwall her tranquillity.

"Sophie Derwall," at length demanded the outraged Mrs. Hopp, "how dare you say such monstrous things? Do you mean to tell me—you who pretend to read so much, to care so little for ephemeral literature—do you mean to tell me that you care nothing for *Browning*?" To suggest her intonation of the sacred syllables is a feat quite beyond the resources of unfeeling print.

"Very little, Julie," responded Mrs. Derwall pleasantly, "very little. And the fact that ten million women go into spasms over him makes me care less. I prefer Lewis Carroll."

At that moment Providence interposed, in the person of the maid.

"A gentleman in the drawing-room, ma'am. What shall I——?"

Mrs. Hopp rose with majesty.

"I won't keep you, Sophie. I must catch my train. I am sorry you won't come with me. You don't know what you miss."

Mrs. Derwall took it with humility, yet with amiability.

"You really make me ashamed of myself, Julie," she returned. "It was lovely of you to think of me. I'll go with you another time—to Proctor's or Keith's, perhaps. They are more in my line, you know. Good-bye."

## II

"Is this the lady of the house?" inquired the gentleman in the drawing-room as Mrs. Derwall appeared upon the threshold.

This question caused her to halt in her progress, and recalled to her mind the fact that she had responded to the maid's announcement with rather more precipitation than she might under other circumstances have displayed.

"It is," she somewhat stiffly replied. "But I regret to say that she requires no books today."

"Oh, please wait a minute!" cried the caller as she started to retire. "I knew I should trip up. I was so sure you would take me for a book agent that I hypnotized myself into beginning like one. But I'm not one. I never was one. I never shall be one. I hate books!"

He ended almost violently. And as she listened Mrs. Derwall could see very well that he was not what she thought.

"I won't run away yet, then," she laughed. "You are too encouraging. I have just estranged a lifelong friend by telling her much the same thing, and I was in danger—well, of caving a little."

"Dear me! Don't cave when you have as good ground as that under your feet! What will you do when you get to a real quicksand? I evidently appeared on the scene just in time. I will give you all the moral support you want. I dare say I can damn and double-damn books in more kinds of ways than you ever dreamed. Life is so amusing that I continually wonder how people can turn their eyes from it long enough to look at a book."

"How about the Higher Life?" inquired Mrs. Derwall demurely.

"What in the world is that?" demanded the caller, mystified. He looked about the room, much as if he expected to see its legs sticking out from behind the curtains.

"Don't ask me!" Mrs. Derwall waved it from her. "Ask any other woman but me. I don't know. I don't want to know. I've just refused to go to town with my lifelong friend and find out. There's a Professor Richard Murch, or Birch, or Smirch, or somebody, who tells people at a dollar a head. But it's not too late for you. The eleven-five train will do you very nicely."

"Oh!" ejaculated the caller. "I don't think I'm in such a hurry as all that." He still looked rather curiously about, however. "But you frighten me. You frighten me more than I expected. I don't know whether I shall dare to tell you what I came in for."

Mrs. Derwall, who thought that things were going very well, encouraged him.

"Don't be afraid of me. I am quite harmless. More than that, I am the most helpless of creatures in the face of a determined appeal. What are you—patent medicine? Needles? Charity? Gold mines? I may invest in you yet."

"Ah, it's nothing of that kind. It's just the opposite. I don't want to take money out of your pocket. I want to put it in."

"Then you're just the man for me!" cried Mrs. Derwall. "Christmas has gone, and ruin stares me in the face!"

"You're very kind," smiled the caller, "but don't go too far. Don't, for instance, imagine me the attorney of a maiden aunt, come to hand over a legacy. And don't read pure altruism in my countenance. I—" He began to laugh. "Shall I say it?"

"If it's respectable," said Mrs. Derwall. "You begin to make me ask myself questions."

"It's only too respectable, heaven knows! But it's a little unusual. It will take your breath away. You will gasp. Perhaps you will scream. You may even faint. One never can tell what ladies will do under unexpected circumstances."

Mrs. Derwall sniffed. There was that in her sniff, however, which intimated that she was not unwilling to hear what her visitor had to impart.

"I like that! Do I look so much like the Eternal Feminine? Do your worst and I will promise you not to make a scene."

"Well, then," said the caller, "I throw the responsibility on you. I came in to see if you would sell me your house."

If faces could fall, as literature popularly affirms, Mrs. Derwall's would have bumped the floor with some force. As it was she treated her interlocutor to a stare in which the surprise he had predicted was mingled with the disappointment to which he had led her. And then, resolved to keep her word, she uttered briefly:

"Why, I don't want to sell my house!"

The stranger did not appear to be in the least disconcerted.

"So far, so good. I've found out, at any rate, that the house is yours to sell. It might have been somebody else's. And let me congratulate you on your self-control."

"As a matter of fact, it is somebody else's—namely, my husband's," rejoined that gentleman's consort with dignity.

"Oh, well, that is a mere detail which does not affect the case," remarked the caller easily. "What I want to know is whether you would make any objection to his parting with it."

Mrs. Derwall looked vaguely about. As a matter of fact, she and Lou had often discussed the matter till they were black in the face. But to have the hypothetical purchaser suddenly materialize made her question her own mind again. Besides which she felt an indefinable resentment against her interlocutor for having turned out so much less interesting than he seemed to promise.

"What in the world do you want of the place?" she asked at last.

"Nothing improper, I assure you! I want to live in it."

"But why? Have you ever been in it before? Does it hold some romance for you?"

"Romance! Not a bit of it! I just happened to be passing by, and as I did so it beckoned to me. 'That is the house for me,' I said, and I came straight in."

"But what *do* you see in it?" demanded the astonished Mrs. Derwall, casting her eye once more about.

"I see everything you don't," responded the caller quickly. "To say nothing of a very agreeable hostess, it's just the right size, it's just the right color, it's just in the right place. How did you happen to build it so exactly for me?"

"We didn't!"

"Madam, you surprise me. You exhibit every symptom of a lady who has lived to repent of her architectural errors. If you bought the house outright, as I hope to do, I should not expect that you would even listen to me. As it is, however, I have hopes of prevailing upon you to let me have it."

"I have nothing to say about it," replied Mrs. Derwall with an air of finality. "You will have to see my husband."

"Of course! And I shall be delighted to do so at the earliest possible moment. But in the meantime, in order that I may do so with the more intelligence, would you mind showing me the premises?"

Mrs. Derwall laughed in spite of herself.

"Such persistence deserves success!

You are perfectly welcome to look around. Only mind, I don't exhibit as to a prospective buyer; I show as to a visiting friend. I have no more idea of getting up and moving out and going all through the torment of architects and builders and strikes and heaven knows what, than I have of——"

"Of going to Professor Murch's lectures," suggested the caller with a smile.

"Yes. Thank you. I couldn't think of anything impossible enough. Will you come this way? This is the reception-room, you see. There is a library on the other side of the hall." And without further ado she led the way through the rooms.

Having recovered her poise, and perhaps with a new appreciation of her companion's qualities, Mrs. Derwall proceeded to enter into the spirit of the occasion—as she well knew how. They had a very lively time of it. They went upstairs. They went downstairs. They explored every cupboard and cubbyhole. They examined the plumbing. They criticized the color schemes. Mrs. Derwall expatiated on all the disadvantages of the house. Her visitor seized unerringly upon every advantage. And so at last they completed in the cellar their round of inspection.

"This is the very nicest part of the house," sighed Mrs. Derwall. "It's so dry and comfortable and cozy that I often wake up in the night and wish I were in it!"

The visitor turned solemnly upon her.

"Madam," he began, "its qualities are such that I am completely undone. Such a laundry, such storerooms, such coal-bins never were on sea or land. I shall not draw a peaceful breath until they are mine. Believe me, madam, never in the world. You will do me an irreparable injury if you refuse to sell me the house. You don't care two pins about it. I do. Sell it to me, then. I will give you eight thousand dollars for it. Now, this minute." And drawing a cheque-book from his pocket he uncapped his fountain-pen. "What name shall I put down?"

Mrs. Derwall was too much surprised by the suddenness of his onslaught to answer.

"Isn't it a fair price?" inquired her companion. "If you don't think so I am sure we shall have no trouble in coming to terms."

"Yes," uttered Mrs. Derwall slowly. "But——"

The gentleman cut her off.

"Of course I have no idea of trying to force you to do what you don't want. So far as that goes, however, I fancy that you're pretty well able to take care of your own end of a bargain. But it strikes me as rather a good deal for you. You can recoup yourself for Christmas, and then you can go to Palm Beach or Cairo or Zanzibar or somewhere for the bad part of the winter, while I am freezing here."

"Why, when would you want to come in?" asked Mrs. Derwall.

"Let's see." He began calculating on his fingers. "Today is Thursday. Friday, Saturday, Sunday—I want to come in Wednesday, next Wednesday, a week from yesterday. That will give me time to get settled before Sunday."

Mrs. Derwall fairly screamed.

"Why, my dear man, have you lost your mind? I never heard of such a thing in my life. It would take me from now till then to get ready if I began this minute. And I have a week-end party on and couldn't begin to touch a thing till Tuesday at the very earliest. I like your blandness!"

He was imperturbable.

"My dear lady, you can do it perfectly well. I have done it myself a dozen times. All it needs is a little generalship. You just arrange to have squads of packers and cleaners follow each other. You could clean out Windsor Castle in a day, that way. Of course, I divide the expense with you. Come, what name shall I write?"

Mrs. Derwall hardly heard him through. She collapsed upon a soap-box, and she laughed until her visitor began to be afraid that she would break in two.

"You ridiculous creature!" she weakly gasped, wiping her streaming eyes. "I declare, you deserve the house! A man who knows what he wants to that degree! Who in the world are you, that you suavely propose to me to move out in a day? It's like carrying off the roof from over my head! Go on! You shall have it in spite of everything. I don't know what my husband will do to me, but it's not often given one to be sublime. Louis N. Derwall is the name. L-o-u——"

And off she went again. By the time she came back the cheque was ready for her. She took it with a certain eagerness, for she was curious as to the identity of her remarkable visitor. But after one glance she suddenly sobered. She looked at the paper for a long time without saying anything. Finally, however, she looked up at the signatory, who stood quizzically watching her.

"Professor Richard Murch?" she asked.

"The same!" responded that personage, with an elaborate bow.

"The Professor Richard Murch who lectures to ladies about Browning and the Higher Life?"

"The very one. And if I don't hurry I shall be late for the lecture you refused to go to. Will you come now?"

She did not answer at first. She looked him slowly up and down for as much as a minute. Then she rose, leisurely crossed the cellar to the furnace, opened the door, and threw in the cheque. After which she looked back over her shoulder.

"No, thank you, professor. And that's what I think of you and your cheque. Good morning."

She turned her back on him again, and took up a shovel as if she thought of putting in some coal. At that Professor Murch, who had hitherto said nothing, started across the floor.

"Permit me, Mrs. Derwall. You may not care to sell me the furnace, but you will, at least, allow me to attend to it this once."

The offended matron tossed her head.

"By no means, Mr. Murch. I wouldn't think of letting you soil your hands. Remember your ladies. They are waiting for you. As for me, I am quite able to look after my own furnace, thank you. I am not a disciple of the Higher Life, you know. I make pies instead of reading poetry. And when it comes to shoveling coal, I dare say I am rather more expert than you." With which she emptied her shovel through the furnace door.

"I am sorry to contradict you," remarked the professor, who had kept a critical eye upon this maneuver. "I am very sorry to contradict you, after my other offenses. But Truth and Honor alike compel me to confess that I can shovel coal better than that!"

Mrs. Derwall's wrath had hitherto maintained lofty heights. But she now began to break down. She betrayed the first signs of a mundane irritation.

"H'm!" she sniffed contemptuously. "I'd like to see you! I bet you can't!"

The professor looked at her.

"Do you mean it?" he quietly asked.

"I do mean it, Mr. Murch!" responded Mrs. Derwall with some spirit. "What's more, I'll bet the house on it. If you can throw three shovelfuls into that furnace without dropping a coal or hitting the side of the door, I'll take another cheque from you."

The professor smiled.

"As a sporting proposition, Mrs. Derwall, I'm afraid that's rather a one-sided bet. And as evidence that I have no wish to get your house from you unfairly, I will thank you for your kindness and beg your pardon for unwittingly imposing upon you. Good morning. If you ever——"

"Come, come, Mr. Murch!" cried Mrs. Derwall derisively. "You don't back out that way. I want to see how well you acquit yourself. Take the shovel, and if you fulfil the terms the house is yours."

He took the shovel which she handed him and looked at her a moment, as if to allow her to retract. So they smiled at each other in mutual derision. Then with the ease of a practiced stoker he put in his three shovelfuls so easily, so quickly, and so accurately, that Mrs. Derwall was left with open mouth. Once more she looked him slowly over, and going back to her soap-box she sat down.

"I don't know," she said. "You're too much for me. Where on earth did you learn to do that?"

The professor disclaimed everything.

"Oh, on a steamer where I worked my passage once. Will you come to hear me lecture now?"

Mrs. Derwall considered.

"I don't know. But I'll pay my bet. And if I were sure that you lecture as well as you shovel coal——!"

## APRIL

THE form of April—beautiful and gay—  
 Adown the world comes dancing in delight:  
 A cloud of snowy apple-blooms by day,  
 A fire of all the daisied stars by night.

She gives the music to the raptured thrush  
 That in the woodland sings the whole day long;  
 She roves with Echo through the startled hush,  
 And mocks the bobolink with shower of song.

Yet though her wondrous charms are fresh and new,  
 None guess the proud queen in the maiden free:  
 She hides her thousand eyes with violets blue,  
 She veils her splendor with simplicity!

EDWARD WILBUR MASON.



# THE MAN AND THE BIRD

By Gertrude Lynch

THE bird came and perched on the window-sill. Another bird showed him the way and, having stayed a moment, cheeped a farewell and flew on.

It was a wide window-sill and very sunny. He had had a long and futile voyaging varied by occasional rests in bare tree-tops and on topply bricks. He had not eaten for hours. There were three fat crumbs on the window-sill and, notwithstanding the day's dusty frosting, he ate them greedily. His physical satisfaction made him self-conscious. He preened himself and picked a feather into place. In his endeavor to obtain a view of the room his beak met a hard substance which responded to his touch with a thin, sharp sound. He was not especially afraid of noises unless they were very sudden and very loud, but motion always annoyed him; the abrupt movement of an object supposed to be stationary made his little heart beat like a hammer. He listened to the response the window made to his attack without a flutter, and continued his close observation from his original vantage point.

There was a square room with curtains at the high, narrow doors, showing vague glimpses beyond, immaculate in their orderliness, having charming bits of color which harmonized into a general scheme of decoration.

It was hung with silk, a deep yellow, which caught and held the sunlight in a lure of joy. He noted smudges of black and brown on the wall, closely resembling places he had flown over at night. He examined carefully the queer-shaped vessels of copper and

brass which would make adorable drinking cups for a thirsty bird; there was one he could even imagine himself bathing in when the weather became a little warmer.

At one corner of a bracket was a plump plaster Cupid whose only adornment was an open book. He looked into the unseeing eyes with a stare of recognition, for once, weary with flight, he had come to a group of these quiet people guarded by a sleeping Italian. He had rested on the Book of Love a long time until the Italian muttered in his sleep and turned on his side with a Latin oath. Then he had flown away, after picking at the Cupid's eyes, to show what he could do to real people if they would only remain still long enough to tranquillize his fears. The Cupid he now gazed at and the other were alike as two peas, only about the toes of this a wandering vine from a window-box full of flowers and green had twined itself in a vegetable caress.

He recognized pieces of misshapen forestry, called furniture, on which human beings perched; he catalogued other articles that the observation of many years had taught him were used for varied purposes; books, for instance, tables and lamps. The very multiplicity of objects argued that the owner was a person of capricious taste, of opulent abandonment to impulse and uncertainty of disposition. He had learned this lesson also; to read human beings from their rooms.

In the far-off corners, he noted pyramids of vari-colored silks, puffs designed to cut off the angles from the room and from conversation as well.

These were the places in which cats rested; languid, luxurious cats—and women.

He always bracketed the two together; they were so much alike, each feline in grace, in unexpectedness, in cruelty, the tiger element domesticated, it is true, but domesticated in a gamut of uncertainty, one all ferocity, another all slothful amiability, with but an occasional vicious stroke, and between them an infinite variety of perplexing types.

He bracketed the two anew, as the person into whose privacy he was peering stood suddenly in the doorway, an arm upraised, holding back the curtains. Their eyes met and he sidled to the edge of the sill ready to fly at the unlooked-for gesture which he had learned to anticipate from creatures of her class. Suspicion and admiration struggled for supremacy. What a nest that fluffy hair would make! How blue the eyes were! An old bird told him once that when a child was born and looked first at the earth the eyes were brown; if at the sky, then heaven gave an infinite variety of cerulean shades for the remembrance. How long she must have looked upward, and how wistfully!

The fabrics that clung about her were soft, frilly things of lace and ribbon, which could sway and swing, could stretch out in enveloping clouds ready to enswathe and imprison a heedless bird. Yet his masculine heart throbbed and thrilled at their pervasive allurements. He remembered meeting a feminine swallow once with a bit of pink ribbon in her beak. How much more attractive she had seemed than one encountered later in his voyaging who had a plain straw for her nest! He respected the thrift that caused the housewife to choose the substance for her home which would stand the stress of wind and weather, but he did not follow her, as he did the first.

The woman was coming toward him; it was time for him to go. It is true the glass was between them, but

he remembered in his more daring days he had waited too long and had just escaped; to this day he trembled as he recalled the feel of the cruel hand that had brushed his coat, the sound of the upward-flung window.

The long, white fingers covered with shining stones, like those on which he sometimes sharpened his beak, were playing on the pane and the woman was pretending not to see him. How difficult life was, with its perils from human beings always threatening—the ledge was so wide and sunny, the room within so inviting and the crumbs so fat!

What was it she said, as he flew away?

"Poor little bird, come back, come back! I only want to play with you! I won't hurt you!"

He had heard that sophistry before.

## II

THE man came in the wake of a friend. The invitation had been given over the table in the club dining-room where they sat tête-à-tête. After he started, he wondered at his acceptance; it must have been the vintage of the port. He had passed the time when it interested him to call on a woman whom his friend thought beautiful. Hours were too scarce and beautiful women too plentiful.

He recognized the expression in her eyes when she bowed, for he knew that he was goodly to the sight; he had seen the look too many times in feminine faces to be mistaken in its reading, too many times to be gratified at its compliment.

He scanned her coldly, critically, under a seeming suavity of manner. He noted the tall, willowy form, the golden hair, the big eyes, now gray, now blue, according to her emotion. He approved and disapproved. It was the feminine equipment which had caused him trouble more than once. He found it safer to praise impersonally, as one praises a statue or a picture.

He viewed his friend's easy departure, on the plea of a suddenly remembered engagement, with trepidation.

Was it a plot they had hatched for his undoing? He must be wary and circumvent it.

His hostess sank on some silken cushions in a corner of the room and pointed to a chair near at hand. He pretended not to see. He wandered about the apartment looking at the photographs, the bric-à-brac and books. She was a cultivated woman, who had traveled much and made the most of opportunity; her conversation had the light touch of the worldling with the subtle sense of an undercurrent that only one who has lived, not merely existed, can perfectly convey.

She spoke once of love; they always did, these feminine allurers. Give them a room without occupant except a helpless man, a dim light and a divan,—the subject was inevitable.

He dismissed it with a sweeping gesture, convincing from the fact that he was not given to emotional expression. The physical movement always gave him relief, for the mere thought made him radiate disapproval. He had been a close observer for years of the marital unrest of his associates and could think of oil and water in a coalescent state rather than of himself as a benedict. He believed it wise for an attractive woman to realize immediately that his interest in her sex had certain well-defined immovable limits.

Platonics gave him an opportunity to counterbalance a seeming bitterness with a touch of humor, for he did not wish to play the rôle of woman-hater. He quoted a current epigram, then shifted hastily away from the subject; he saw her hesitate on the brink of discussion. He kept the conversation within the bounds of conventionality with a wary eye on the tiny clock which slowly but surely showed the path to freedom.

He thought he detected a reproachful glance as he arose to say good night and responded vaguely to her invitation to come in some time for a cup of five o'clock tea. He breathed deeply as he went down in the elevator. What a peril he had escaped!

The woman threw herself back on

the silken cushions and laughed in a slow, mirthful way. It is not the sort of laugh good for a man to hear, who is fearful of entanglements. It was a laugh of many elements, coquetry, malice, carelessness and prophecy. The component of chief value was the latter.

### III

THE bird came again and again. It seemed as if the sill must have been built for him, so well it suited. There was even a jutting angle and when the rain fell he was sheltered better than when perched on bare tree-trunks. It was late Fall when he made his first visit, and during the cold, sleety storms of the following season the sill was a veritable rock of refuge. He never entirely put aside his attitude of suspicion, but, little by little, admitted that the woman had other aims and objects in life than his pursuit. There were many times when she was absent, and much as he feared, he missed her, too. There were days when she entertained fashionably gowned women and well-groomed men and he, cowering outside in the cold, was not even noticed, but the crumbs the next day were fatter and there were more of them, so he forgave her.

He liked her best when she would lie half-asleep on the great white bearskin in front of the fire, where the flames burned merrily and made dancing shadows on the fluffy head and that of the snarling, red-tongued brute whose semblance to life made the picture startling. In these semi-trances she appeared to be dreaming of something very pleasant and he could watch her without fear of disturbance; not too long, however, for she had a startling habit of sitting up suddenly, bending toward him as if she were about to jump and ejaculating the mysterious words, "Poor little ones, if they only knew!"

The abrupt gesture, cat-like and capricious, the phrase with its double meaning, always tantalized him, always drove him away. It seemed to him that her eyes said she knew he would return and he did in spite of his pride. Life had changed him, indeed. He remembered the time when his greatest

joy was in the knowledge that he would never have to retrace his flight. The unerring charm of change, the habit of freedom unrestrained by any law had given zest to sunlight, to food, and rest obtained where he listed. Now other ledges seemed cheerless places, other crumbs lacked a certain indefinable flavor, other inmates of other rooms uninteresting as the furniture on which they perched. He wondered if he were growing old. He recalled seeing one of his own feather at the corner of a dripping roof, day after day, for the habit of place was strong enough to keep him at his post. He was like that, apparently, for never a sunny morning came, never a gray day, never a snowy, sleety storm but he sheltered himself in his chosen home.

#### IV

THE man's first call was followed by a second. He did not know how it happened, but it seemed to come as a matter of course. Perhaps it was due to the fact that he and the woman had friends in common, and shortly after his introduction he found himself her dinner partner at the home of a mutual acquaintance. He discovered that she had the tact to talk to a man when he was served with the things he did not care for and to leave him alone with his favorite entrée. He had been forced to admit before that she was beautiful and charming; now he added the conclusion that she was sensible as well. He saw that she was bored by her left-hand companion, a judge of the Supreme Court, whose jokes were as ponderous as the law he administered and with the same signs of decrepit age. He felt himself a modern Sidney rescuing her from the penalty of her kindly spirit. There was an entire absence of the coquetry which had before irritated him. She had discovered, it would seem, that he was not a man to be trifled with and the new attitude must argue respect.

She did not meet his glance when the men joined the party in the drawing-room after dinner. How he hated a woman to do that; it was such a

signal of understanding for the most unnoting to read! But when he came to her she welcomed him gratefully, as though she had feared the judge's advance. He allowed her to talk a little about herself and gathered from the few facts that she was rather alone in the world, for the possession of a deaf aunt who spent three quarters of every day in bed was surely not an exhilarating companionship. A man should not be too selfish. He determined when he could make it convenient to relieve this loneliness by stopping for the cup of tea, the invitation to which he had once inwardly scorned.

It was a pleasant oasis after the desert of the day's work, and his calls gave her so much delight that he repeated them at infrequent intervals. Once in a while he came after dinner, and, finding her alone, chatted with more ease than when her room was filled with droppers-in. He discovered, quite by accident, that they had much the same attitude toward the world; follies and frivolities wearied her, too, while she confessed that life had little else to offer in their place.

Once or twice there was a return to her coquettish tricks and he had to warn her by a peremptory departure that he understood and resented them. He had outlined his plan of conduct and she must respect it. Perhaps he had been harsh in his judgment and they were not really a snare, merely caprice, for in a sudden burst of confidence she told him one evening of an early disappointment and the determination never to marry. He was positive if he were a marrying man he could change this attitude toward his sex, but as that was a dangerous subject he did not discuss it, unless the cautious pressure of her hand at parting could be construed into the sympathy he felt. The next day he sent her a box of flowers which he made an excuse for another visit to explain that he did it because she reminded him of a sister who was now dead.

How much better such a friendship was for both than marriage with its preliminaries of emotions and its end



of incarceration! She seemed so to understand it. Her attitude gradually became that of one who studied only his ease and comfort. She left him alone with his cigar and book and only laughed when she returned to find his feet in holy places of scarlet and yellow silk; she fed him often and her dinners were works of art; she never bored him with chattering women. There was no reason why they should not continue in such a pleasant relationship to the end. Once or twice he wondered dimly what he had done to deserve this good fortune.

One day the woman was stopped by a vendor on the street. He was ragged and his knuckles were blue with the cold. There was a stubbly growth of beard on his weak face and his eyes were watery. He held an empty cage in his hand and begged her to save a suffering family by its purchase. The woman thought of the bird and bought the cage. She paid more for it than the vendor asked and was followed by a blessing which partook of none of the weakness so apparent in his face and manner.

When she reached home, Marie, the maid, cleaned and polished the purchase. The woman ornamented it with a wreath of green with bright red berries and put a bit of cuttle-fish at the side. She filled one porcelain bowl with seed and one with water. It was quite easy to detect, while she was doing this, the fine line at the lips' edge which denotes decision.

Fate arranged that the man should stop on his way to the office the following morning. He had remembered a book she had expressed a wish to read and had bought it, so that she might peruse it during the day and tell him her decision at night, a custom recently formed.

He found her dainty and sweet; her fluffy hair had a wondrous luster and the blue eyes were fresh from sleep. On the table was the gilded cage, the door open and a trail of crumbs leading to the window, which was open just far enough to admit a shy bird without detriment to his plumage.

The maid came in, lighted the fire on the hearth, swung the portières and withdrew. The flame crackled and sparkled, making a sharp contrast to the clear, cold current of air which came through the window. The man sat in the corner according to her direction so as not to scare the bird when he came. They conversed with long pauses between the words and in the pauses the man pondered on what she had said concerning his resemblance to the bird; he recalled the pretty air with which she had stated that they had come into her life at the same time and she had particularized certain points of resemblance, the air of suspicion, the sleek plumage, the all-seeing eyes. He moved a little uneasily as he thought, and gazed apprehensively at the cage with its decorative wreath hiding the gilded bars.

There was a high wind, and though the sun shone there was an occasional flurry of snow against the panes. It was a cruel day for a lonely bird to face the world in.

She asked suddenly what became of birds who died? No one ever found their bodies. Were they destroyed by monsters of the air? He seemed to read the analogy in her mind of men who died alone, forgotten, uncared-for by loving beings of the other sex, created for their protection and comfort.

He fingered his watch. It was time for him to go, but the problem of the bird's future was too personal.

He took a new survey of the cozy room, as if this were his first visit. He breathed the odor of the pine needles on the flame, glanced at the music on the piano, at the many books in costly bindings, at the glorious sweep of Victory's wing against whose drapery the mutinous head, with its wealth of hair and its alluring eyes, was posed in negligent grace.

Sharply the contrast of his own room was etched in his memory, a cheerless place kept with the headlessness of the paid servitor unmoved by any love of the inmate. But it was his own and this, beautiful as it was, might become a prison.



She was leaning forward and from his corner he could see that the bird had come. He alighted at the angle of the sill and his bright black eyes saw the crumbs beginning on the inner side of the ledge.

Would he come in or stay without? They waited in a tense silence, broken only by the crackling of the burned-out log as it fell in a shower of flame points. The current of air rustled the pages of a book.

The bird entered, warily, cautiously, pecking at a crumb, and then lifted his head to note that the woman was quiet and that the shapeless mass in the far corner was motionless as she. He had roosted on the twig of a black-branched tree all night and the storm had rocked him incessantly. One feather was broken and he felt a strange pain in his claw which hampered his flight. It seemed to him all at once as if Winter had frozen the youth in his heart.

How warm the room seemed and how sweet it smelled! There was the pungent odor that the Spring brings to the weary earth after the elements have fought their fight and been defeated. It was the perfume the conquered pours at the throne of the conqueror.

The crumbs were fresh and the seed sweet. He pecked his way slowly along and did not look back. Fear had fled all at once, for nothing—not even death itself—could be so bad as the cruel cold and the ruthless sleet that shook him and daunted his once vigorous fighting spirit.

When he reached the door of the cage he stopped, and with his tiny head turned first one way, then the other, looked it over. There was a strange prescience of bird-lore in the glance. Had older birds chirped about it when he was rocked in the nest of infancy? The swing, the cups of water and seed, the snow-white cuttle-bone, were all familiar objects, and he felt neither surprise nor dread.

The wind blew shrilly and the leaves of the book startled him with their flip-flap like the wings of an approaching enemy. He had heard the same sound the previous night when something big and dark had swooped upon him suddenly and had given him but a second to escape.

Should he go in or stay out? There was a lone crumb on the door sill and he swallowed it while he considered.

The man and woman leaned forward with a simultaneous movement. The man could feel his heart beat through his waistcoat and a strange, inscrutable smile came to the woman's lips, like the one he had noticed the evening they met for the first time.

## V

SURELY, as one who has no indecision further to perplex and annoy, the bird entered the cage. He tested the swing, drank greedily, lifting his throat to the scarlet-wreathed roof and scraped his blunted beak on the white cuttle-fish.

The door and window were still open and the way to freedom clear.

There was a question in the woman's eyes as she raised them to the man's.

He understood. The problem of the future was for him to decide. Everything flashed before him in a second, the old life of irresponsibility and selfishness, the new one of security and joy, with its penalty of irritating cares.

He rose abruptly and walked to the window, which he closed with a quick, impatient motion. He took a step forward, hesitated, then, with the same gesture he had once employed to indicate his loathing of love's restraint, shut the door of the cage and fastened it firmly.

The bird, with a last flutter of the lamed wing, settled contentedly on the perch and went to sleep.



# NON COMPOS MENTIS

By Ellis Parker Butler

THE old shanty-boatman had wandered over to where the amateur was fishing and had seated himself on the dry sand. He looked at the opposite shore of the Mississippi thoughtfully.

"So ye don't chaw," he said. "Well, it's a nasty bad habit and you're better off not to, though I'm aching for one this minute. People all has habits; some has one and some has another. I knowed a feller once as took snuff, and when he couldn't get snuff he took pepper, which was why his temper was always hot. Once he took red pepper that some picnic people had left on the grass and he sneezed one week steady, only stoppin' for meals. He never forgot it. His name was Jim Bagley. There is some kinds of smokin' tobacco I kin chew very satisfactory. I don't suppose——"

The amateur felt in his vest pocket and handed the old man a cigar.

"Say, now, I call that clever of ye," the river-rat said. "Dumbed if I don't! If ye don't mind I'll just smoke some of this here *cee-gar* first, an' chew what's left. A *cee-gar* is most too mild to chaw until it's most smoked up; then it gets some snap to it; I say, there ain't no better chawin'—when you ain't got nothin' else to chaw—than the last end of a smoked *cee-gar*. I'm obliged to ye. I saw right off you wasn't one of them stingy cusses like Jim Bagley I was tellin' of. I say, it don't pay to be stingy. It didn't pay Jim Bagley. It set his neighbors agin him and he lost his fortune just the same."

The fish were not biting and the

amateur sat down on the sand a yard or more from the old man and lighted a new cigar for himself. He kept one eye on the row of fish-poles he had stuck in the sand, and prepared to listen.

"He did, did he?" he inquired. They were the only words he had said.

"Yes, sir," said the old man, "he lost every cent, and it served him right. He was a skinflint, was Jim Bagley. You see, that Summer all the shanty-boats pretty near from Stillwater to St. Louis was tied up right across the river there, about three miles above Wautauska. We was quite a town all by ourselves. That was the year the pearl-button business started up in Wautauska, and everybody was dredgin' for mussels. It was a mixed lot, and some low-down trash among us, but mussels was plenty and so was whisky, so we was what you might denominate a happy family. When one feller got paid off he invited all his neighbors and we had high old times, and this Jim Bagley was like all the rest until he fell heir to his fortune. Then he got uppish and began to wear shoes every day, and socks on Sunday, and once he got his hair cut. I never see money ruin a man quicker than it ruined Jim Bagley.

"The way he acted you would have thought Jim had earned that money hisself. That was what made it so hard for us to bear. That feller Jim had a clean hundred dollars, and all he had to do for it was to do nothin' but let a cousin he had never heard of go and die. He didn't even have to help the doctors to kill him. The

cousin fell in a mill-dam out Wilton way and killed hisself. That's what I call bein' thoughtful and accommodatin', but Jim took all the credit.

"We all wanted to show we wasn't goin' to freeze Jim out just because he had money. Some folks talk about the sinfulness of millionaires and the wickedness of the money power and all that, but we wasn't that way. Jim was Jim, and no money was goin' to stan' between us and him, so we all went around sociable to his shanty-boat and offered to borrow a few dollars, like friends should, to show there was no hard feelin's. I was the oldest and I went first. I didn't hang back, neither. I went the minute I heard he had been left some money, and I was willin' to take any amount from a dime to the whole caboodle. Jim acted scandalous. He didn't exactly kick me off his boat. I jumped off. I wished afterwards that I had let him kick me, because he was barefoot at that time and if he broke his toe it would have served him right. The minute I lit in the river I was sorry I'd jumped, but Jim was cussin' an' swearin', so I wasn't goin' back on his boat by no means.

"We all see how that money was spoilin' Jim, and we all felt sorry and willin' to do our best to spare him from the ruin it was doin' to his character, but after Jim come home a couple of times and found his doors busted in and his mattress ripped open, and things in general upside down, he got a nasty streak and he used to sit out on the rear porch of his shanty-boat cleanin' and loadin' an old army musket with ostentation in full view of everybody, as a sort of hint that visitors wasn't welcome, so we let him ruin his character as much as he wanted to.

"He was a clean disgrace to our shanty-boat town, Jim was. He wasn't only stingy, but he got murder in his heart. He wouldn't have thought two cents of killin' the honestest and most respected shanty-boater in the community. Age wasn't no protec-

tion. Ye can judge how vicious he was when I tell ye that one day when Jim had gone to town, a certain feller who was afraid mebbly tramps might come along and rob Jim while he was away thought he'd go into Jim's boat and get his money and keep it safe for Jim until he come back. Mebbly ye can't believe it, but when that thoughtful neighbor pushed open Jim's door—goin' to all the trouble of bustin' the lock to do it—a spring-gun business that Jim had fixed up went off and that old army musket shot the feller in the neck, and Jim jumped out of the willows where he had been sneak-in' round. That's how onery mean and suspicious he'd got to be. Ye can see the scar on my neck to this day. I didn't have nothin' more to do with Jim from that day on. Neither did nobody. Twenty-eight fellers left the Democratic party and turned anti-monopoly Populists right then, and the boats that was nearest Jim's boat moved out of musket range.

"One day another shanty-boat come along. We seen her come drifting out from between the Illinois shore and Goose Island, and from the way she acted we guessed all hands was asleep on her. She would come a ways bow first, and a ways stern first—which was the same thing, stern bein' bow and bow bein' stern on a shanty-boat—an' then she'd float sideways and diagonal, turnin' round and round. The current swung her off from the Illinois side and across toward us, and in an hour or two she drifted in and bumped into Jim's boat and hung there. Some of us rowed down and went aboard, thinkin' that if the owners had fell overboard we had ought to take anything worth taking that might be on her and keep it safe until we could find out who it belonged to, but we didn't take nothin' but a look. There was two men on board and an empty jug, and both was sleepin' sweetly. When we kicked them they only grunted and rolled over. One was a tall man with red hair and long red beard, and one was short and wore spectacles, but both was intoxicated beyond anything

I ever saw. There was nothin' left in the jug but the smell.

"About sundown the next day the little feller come out on his deck and looked around. He seemed surprised to be where he was and more surprised to see Jim settin' with his old musket on his lap, eyin' him with suspicion.

"Howdy," said the feller.

"You git a move on, and git yer blanked old tub away from here," says Jim, in his nasty way. "If ye don't I'll let go at ye, and this gun ain't loaded with kisses and smiles, neether."

"The little feller see that Jim was in earnest, so he got his pole and tried to pole out, but she wouldn't budge. Then Jim got his pole and went aboard and helped push, but it wouldn't work. The river was fallin' and the stranger's shanty-boat was stuck fast in the mud.

"All right," says Jim at last, 'stay where ye are, but if ye ever step foot on my boat, bang! goes your head off! And if ye want to know who I am, I'm the man that's got a hundred dollars, and I'm the man that's goin' to keep it. I tell ye now so these fool neighbors of mine won't give ye no wrong ideas on the subject. Don't let 'em tell ye I'm a generous, sweet-tempered old gent, because if ye git that notion ye are liable to be shot full of holes. Make up your mind right now that I'm a stingy, close-fisted skinflint, with suspicions of every man and lady, and a good old army musket to back up my suspicions. I'm a hermit I am, and I don't receive callers on Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Thursdays, Fridays, Saturdays, nor Sundays. Nor no other days.'

"The little fellow listened calm and polite until Jim got through, and then he took off his glasses and wiped them on his shirt and put them back on again. He wore thick glasses that made his eyes look big as saucers. When he had his glasses on he looked all eyes and as innercent as a calf.

"I believe ye," he says.

"You'd better," says Jim and he went back on his own boat.

"That day the little feller rowed up to my shanty-boat to borrow food and

drink, seein' as he had none of his own and he asked what about Jim. Some of the other fellers come aboard to see what he was like, and between us we gave him a pretty good history of Jim. When we was done he looked us over careful and says:

"And you ain't got that hundred dollars off of him yet?"

"No," I says, 'and you needn't say it that way. We done the best we could. Angels could do no more.'

"I was only surprised that you didn't get it," he says. 'You—you look as if you'd have got it.'

"We passed by the compliment.

"Nor you can't get it, neither," I says.

"Me?" he says, 'me get it? No! Nor I wasn't thinkin' of it. Do I look like a man who would do a poor old man out of his money? I don't want to say nothin' to hurt your feelin's, he says, 'but with me it's different. I can see how it must hurt you to have an old friend and neighbor refuse a loan when he's rollin' in wealth. I can see that. I can see how wrong and ungrateful it is of him to treat *you* that way. But I ain't his old friend. I ain't tied to him by them sacred ties of—of consanguinity. He hain't no call to lend *me* none of his money, nor me to ask it of him. I couldn't think to want it even. No!'

"He sat thoughtfully a minute.

"No," he says at last, 'I don't want his money. You tell him so.'

"I ain't got no megaphone or I'd oblige ye," I says, for we all had moved our boats as far as possible from Jim's, since he didn't seem to hanker for our company.' The little fellow sighed.

"Such a world," he says. 'To think of him, once respected and loved by one and all 'now scorned by and afraid of his neighbors. Boys, it's a queer world! There's my pardner, now. He was a most respected professor of gasology at the University of Stillwater when I first knowed him, and look at him now! What is he now?'

"Drunk," I says; 'ossified drunk.'

"Temporarily intoxicated, perhaps," says the little feller, 'but permanently

*non compos mentis*. Looney as a goose. Plum crazy.'

"'Crickets!' I says, 'an' what made you take up with a crazy man, anyhow?"

"The little feller turned his calf eyes on me.

"'I was duty bound to,' he says, simple and confidin'. 'He was my *almy mater*, he was. I studied gasology under him, and he paid my way through the university. I'd never have took any degree as a doctor but for him, so when he went crazy from over-studyin' I diagnosed his case, and see he needed rest and a water voyage, so I got this shanty-boat and started off with him.'

"'It does ye credit,' says Mike Larrity.

"The doctor looked up quick and studied Mike's face for a while.

"'Maybe,' he says, 'it does, but 'twill be a great feather in my cap if I cure him. He's suffering from peloparnassus of the archipelogam, which ain't never yet been cured in man or beast, and if I can restore him in his right mind and his great work at the University of Stillwater I will be famous; my reputation will be made.'

"'How are you getting along with it?' I asks.

"'Fairly,' he says with a sigh, 'just fairly. So long as I can keep him under the infloence of lick the symptoms is good and he's only mild and amoosin' crazy, but when he sobers up he gets one of his bad streaks and is dangerous to be near. If I could only keep him continuous under the lick until he's cured he'd be cured soon, but we ain't got no money nor no way to get none and—'

"He had to stop to take off his glasses and wipe away his tears.

"'If any of ye had a pint ye wouldn't be usin' soon,' he suggested, so I filled a pop bottle out of my whisky-jug and after awhile he went back to his boat.

"'Oh, yes!' says Mike, when the doctor was gone, 'doctors and professors and Universities of Stillwater! Oh, yes! And lunatics! Oh, yes! In a pig's eye! Didn't I come from the

little old town of Stillwater meself? Don't I know there ain't no university there? Say, I met them two fellers at Dubuque last year. They was paintin' roofs with water-proof tar paint and floatin' from place to place in that shanty-boat. You bet they got out of town before it rained on their water-proof roofs, they did! Them's a nice pair of professors and doctors, they is. They didn't know me with this beard on, that's all.'

"Knowin' this, it was good fun to see that old red-headed professor play crazy. He was sure a great play-actor, and we used to row down and watch him, bein' careful to keep to the off side from Jim's shanty-boat.

"That old skeesicks of a imitation professor used to sit out on his little stern deck and mingle white clovers into his red hair and sing, 'I'm called little Buttercup' by the hour at a time. We nearly died laughin'. Ther' was the professor, braidin' his beard and tyin' it with ribbons, and there was the calf-eyed doctor soothin' him and talkin' to him like he was a baby, and there was old Jim scowlin' at the whole show and holdin' his musket at 'ready, aim,' and impartial whether he shot the show or the audience. That was a great Summer.

"We liked it so well and we was so divided in mind about how the doctor was goin' to git that hundred dollars out of Jim that we paid liberal in food and lick to keep the show goin' on. We fed and watered the professor and that doctor like we was a Salvation Army Relief Corps, and the professor aimed to please. He got funnier and funner. One day he was the King of Germany givin' away diamonds and one day he was Roosevelt givin' away post-offices, and the next day he wuld be Vanastorbilt givin' away money. Whatever he was, he was free and liberal with what he pretended to have to give, and he never missed offerin' it to Jim, and Jim never missed sayin' nothin' and handlin' his musket. Jim felt as how he had his hundred dollars and didn't need no diamonds nor post-offices nor crowns, but we



other fellers, not havin' the cash, took whatever the professor offered, just to humor him. And all the time the doctor kept talkin' to Jim about the case, and what he hoped to do, and how dreadful it would be if the professor got worse again. Jim may have got interested, but if he did he didn't let on. He never spoke but to warn the doctor to keep off his boat and to keep the professor off.

"This went on about two months, and then one night the doctor came up and told us he was mighty worried. He said the professor had took a turn for the worse and had got hold of a seven-shooter revolver and nobody could tell what would happen, but he hoped if he could humor him the professor would do no harm, but that he would have to be humored or he would get violent and ugly and likely do damage.

"The river was about on the turn, startin' on the Autumn rise, so we see pretty plain that the doctor and the professor was gettin' ready to move on down river, for a foot more water would float their boat. I says we would come around next day and help humor the professor. The doctor says he would be grateful, for the professor always liked a crowd; it made him feel more important, and soothed him.

"There ain't no danger, is there?" I asks, speakin' for all, for a seven-shooter ain't what you might call as safe a plaything as a baby's rattle is, and whether a man is out-and-out crazy or only puttin' up a good imitation.

"No," says the doctor, solemn as an owl. "There ain't no danger to none of *you*. That's the funny thing about the professor's case. Them he loves he don't harm even in his wildest moments. No matter if he gets as rampageous frenzied as a mad bull, he remembers them that was gentle to him and cherished him with food and drink and he don't endanger them in life, liberty or pursoot of happiness. But," he says, "them as has turned the eye of scorn on him and has, in particular, sat out on a back porch of a shanty-boat

cuddlin' an old army musket with intent to kill, he is nuts on. The way the professor is apt to act up to such is scandalous and, if he should happen to shoot that seven-shooter at any such vermin, I'd like to have one and all on hand to witness that I done my best to restrain the professor."

"Doc," I asks him, as man to man, "do you reckon the professor will bang away at Jim?"

"The doctor shook his head regretful.

"I fear——" he says, and these is his very words, "I fear the worst. He's took a dislike to Jim."

"When does the show begin?" I asks.

"The show?" says the doctor, surprised. "Oh, you mean— Well, the dear professor's attacks seem to caluminate about nine-thirty sharp, a. m."

"We'll all be on hand when the curtain rises," I says, and so we was.

"It was a calm and peaceful morn, and hot as boiled mush, when we all rowed down and gathered off them two house-boats. Jim was on his little back deck, army musket and all, includin' his suspicious eye, but there was not a sound from the doctor's boat but the noise of smashin' and crashin' chinaware, and prompt at nine-thirty the door burst open and out come the professor, his red hair mussed, and the little doctor pullin' him back by the full of his shirt. In one hand the professor had his seven-shooter and in the other an axe, and he let out a roar like a cow and swung the axe over the doctor's head. It was thrillin'! The doctor give a screech and jumps overboard and strikes out for the closest skiff.

"The professor stood up and laughed like a regular lunatic, swingin' his axe and wavin' his seven-shooter, and lookin' out at the doctor swimmin' dog-fashion.

"Jim was cool but nervous. He sat quiet with his musket across his knees, the mean end of it conveniently p'inted at the professor as if by chance, and the hammer up, and his finger gently caressin' the trigger.

"The doctor stood up in the skiff he had climbed into and yelled, 'Humor him!' and all of a sudden the professor turned and blazed away at Jim, and yelled. Jim's musket went off just like the professor meant it should, before Jim had time to aim good, and the next minute the professor had Jim covered. Jim done the best thing he could do—he did nothin'.

"*'Who says I ain't Jay Gould?'* hollered the professor. *'You say I ain't!'* frownin' at Jim.

"*'Humor him!'* shouts the doctor, jumpin' up and down, *'humor him, you stingy-hearted dog, humor him! Humor him or he'll shoot ye! Tell him he's Jay Gould, you big fool!'*

"Jim looked at us and then at the professor.

"*'Humor him!'* yells the doctor again, *'you've got to humor c-r-a-z-y folks!'* he spelled it out like ye do when ye don't want a baby to know what ye're sayin'. Jim seen it was up to him to humor.

"*'You say I ain't Jay Gould,'* says the professor again, *'and you've got to die for it.'*

"*'Hold on!'* says Jim. *'Hold on, professor! I don't say no sich thing. You put up that pistol and I'll say you're anybody ye want me to. I know you're Jay Gould! I knowed it the first time I see ye!'*

"*'That's right,'* shouts the doctor, *'humor him!'*

"*'I've got ten millions of gold dollars,'* says the professor, pokin' his pistol at Jim.

"*'Sure, ye have,'* says Jim. *'If I ain't mistook, it's eleven millions. Ain't it eleven?'*

"*'The professor seemed pleased. He grinned at Jim, but he forgot to put down that shiny seven-shooter.'*

"*'Eleven?'* he says, *'It's twenty million now! It's increasin' a million gold dollars a minute.'*

"*'That's right,'* says Jim, enthusiastic, *'that's dead right! Increasin' a million a minute. Why, you could buy up this whole Mississippi River from Cairo to Saint Paul and not feel it. You've got oceans of money,*

*you have! You've got so much you don't want no more, do ye? Ye wouldn't take any if I offered it to ye, would ye?'*

"*'No,'* says the professor, *'I've got twenty millions in round gold dollars, I have. I can give money away, I can. I'm goin' to give ye a million dollars.'*

"*'Thank ye kindly,'* says Jim, all smiles. Whatever he had thought, he was dead certain now that the professor was sure enough looney.

"The professor stuck his left hand in his pocket and pulled out a piece of newspaper.

"*'Hold on,'* he says, *'you want to rob me! Everybody wants to rob me!'*

"*'No, I don't,'* says Jim, very anxious to please. *'I'll take it or leave it just as you say, Mr. Gould.'*

"*'Business is business,'* says the professor, sort of hesitatin'.

"*'Sure, it is,'* says Jim agreeable.

"*'It ain't business to give ye a million dollars,'* says the professor. *'You ain't no library nor no college.'*

"*'Ain't I?'* says Jim. *'What am I?'*

"*'You're Jim Bagley,'* says the professor.

"*'Sure I am!'* remarks Jim, quite delighted, not knowin' but the professor might have decided him to be a muskrat or a whale.

"*'It ain't business to give ye a million dollars,'* says the professor, very shrewd, *'but I'll lend ye a million.'*

"*'Humor him!'* shouts the doctor, and Jim humors him.

"*'I'd rather borry it like ye say,'* says Jim, *'than to take it outright. It's more like business.'*

"*'Here it is!'* says the professor, reachin' out the piece of newspaper, but of a sudden he draws back. *'Gosh!'* he says. *'It ain't no million, after all. It's only a hundred. Only one hundred dollars, good money.'*

"*'Well—'* says Jim, and the doctor made signs to him to take it. *'Well,'* he says, *'I just need a hundred*

in my business, Mr. Gould. If ye could accommodate with a hundred—'

"Until tomorrow,' says the professor, grand like.

"Until tomorrow,' says Jim, holdin' out his hand.

"That's the way!' shouts the doctor. 'That's how to humor him!'

"The professor reached over and handed Jim a piece of paper, and Jim grabs it quick and backs away from the pistol in a hurry.

"I must put this in my bank,' he says, edgin' toward his door. 'I must put it in my bank quick.'

"The professor stuck his pistol in his pocket and laughed.

"Put it where ye blame please,' he says, as sensible as one could say it.

"Jim jumps for his cabin in a hurry.

"Gents,' says the doctor, still as sober as a judge, 'there's some things we men oughtn't to stand, and that is to see a feller like that ornery Jim Bagley rob a simple-minded man like the professor. By rights I ought to go right into that Jim-animal's shanty-boat and get back them hundred dollars this minute, but I won't. No, sirs! I believe even a crazy man's bargain is a bargain, and the professor loaned them hundred dollars until tomorrer. But tomorrer that Jim Bagley has got to pay them back. You all seen him borrow a hundred dollars, didn't ye?'

"We was sure we had. We all said so.

"Well, then,' says the doctor, 'tomorrer he pays them back or I'll have the law on him. I wish't,' he says to me, 'you'd manage to tell Jim.'

"I rowed in and called Jim. He come out, suspicious as usual, but when he see who it was he went back and got his musket.

"I explained I'd come as a peaceful citizen to talk, and he believed me, only he made me take off my clothes and come aboard naked, so as to be sure I didn't have no concealed weapons. I went inside and sat on the edge of his cot and explained.

"Well,' he said, 'what's to be done?'

"Pay up,' I says; 'that's all there is to be done. Ye borrowed the hundred, didn't ye?'

"It was a piece of old newspaper,' says he.

"No,' I says, 'it wasn't. Of course,' I says, 'I and the fellers may not be good judges. It's been sich a long time since we seen any money that we might be mistook. Now if we had fifty real dollars to divide 'round to sort of compare with the hundred the professor passed to you, we might be convinced.'

"Jim studied awhile.

"If the professor's shanty-boat should happen to break loose durin' the night,' I says, 'and to float ten or twelve miles below town, it would be a sad misfortune.'

"Very sad,' says Jim, 'especially if ten or a dozen of you fellers went along in skiffs to try to keep it from driftin' too far down stream.'

"Of course,' I says, 'if it broke loose we would do our best.'

"Do I pay the fifty now, or when?'

"Twenty-five down, and twenty-five when we git back.'

"Jim produced.

"How is it?' asks the doctor when I come out.

"Fine!' I says. 'It's all fixed.'

"Good,' he says. 'I'll give ye five of it.'

"That was liberal in the doctor, but I never got that five.

"Somehow or other the professor's shanty-boat broke loose that night and floated down river. And talk about bein' crazy! Me and the fellers went along for about twelve miles, to see that the professor's boat didn't run afoul of no snags, and I give my word the professor and the doctor was both crazy over it. When we left them they was both *non compos mentis* in language I wouldn't repeat to a gentleman. I was glad to find out how evil-minded they was. I told Jim Bagley about it when I went to git the other twenty-five dollars, and the words he spoke as he paid up showed me he had been their near neighbor too long."

## TONIGHT

“SOMETIME—but not tonight—sometime”—  
My heart as roses bowed by rain  
At cadence of that old refrain,  
That tremulous, impassioned rhyme,  
“Sometime—dear Love, sometime.”

Tonight, dear doubt of Love, tonight!  
Aye, garnered roses fade, I know—  
Yet those ungarnered bloom and go  
Pale and forgotten from our sight.  
Tonight, dear doubt of Love, tonight!

“Sometime—dear joy of Love—sometime”  
Thine eyes that kiss my soul tonight  
With spirit kisses, hot and white,  
Will close to Love, be blind to rhyme—  
“Sometime—dear joy of Love, sometime.”

Tonight—O Love, we have tonight!  
Make sure the lock of heaven's gate  
Within thine arms, ere 'tis too late!  
Love may a rover be with light—  
Tonight, dear dream of Love, tonight!

MARTHA GILBERT DICKINSON BIANCHI.



THE cyclone tore its horrid way across the landscape. The air was filled with dust, trees, cattle, human beings and sections of scenery. In a moment it was all over. The sun peeped timidly through the murky atmosphere. Its light revealed the awful devastation of the storm. Just outside the danger zone stood a man. “Darn it!” he ejaculated, “why didn’t he blow his horn!”



## EXTENUATING CIRCUMSTANCES

THE Recording Angel suddenly put his fingers in his ears.  
“What was that for?” asked St. Peter, when they had been removed.  
“Oh, I saw Brown’s new derby hat blow off, just as he was getting on a car,”  
was the explanation of this kind-hearted action.

# THE BYWORD

By Arthur Stanley Wheeler

DURING the Autumn and Winter of his freshman year at Ware, Bobby Dale maintained a fairly good stand in his studies and became popular with his classmates by reason of the cheerily happy-go-lucky personality which all his father's money and all his mother's indulgence had not succeeded in curdling into selfishness; but in the Spring he made the track team, and in the Ware-Carlton dual games ran the memorable quarter-mile, still cherished in the athletic annals of Ware, wherein he caught Ballinger, the Carlton veteran of three seasons, at the last turn, raced neck and neck with him for a hundred yards and pitched across the tape a winner by a foot, in time a fraction less than fifty seconds. It was a great achievement for a freshman, and Bobby was cheered and toasted and beaten on the back until his young head, comparatively level though it was, swelled about three inches. He went home to Minnesota for his Summer vacation laboring under the impression that he was something of a man, and his reception did not tend to correct that impression. His mother, who had about as much sense as the average woman in such circumstances, fell down and worshiped at his shrine, and Dale *père* was too busy increasing his capital to bother with his son. As for the damsels of the native town, they fairly kowtowed before Bobby, who invaded picnics and tennis bees with his "W" cap tilted rakishly over his left ear, and got so much adulation that he came to expect it as his right. Consequently he was a trifle piqued when he failed to get it from Felicia. Felicia

was only sixteen, still in skirts of ankle-length, and on the verge of departing for Saint Somebody-or-other's to be 'finished'; but she and Bobby had sat on the curbstone and swopped chewing-gum when he was twelve and she ten, and she saw no adequate reason for regarding him as a demigod.

"Honest, Bobby," said she, "I can't do it. I can't ogle and simper and call you 'Oh, Mr. Dale!' You may be a great man, but you're the same old Bobby to me."

Whereupon Bobby, being at bottom a good sort, laughed cheerfully and without malice, and said that he was going to kiss Felicia, and did it despite her struggles, and was forgiven, and had really a much better time with her than with the young persons who ogled and simpered and called him, "Oh, Mr. Dale!" Nevertheless, when he got back among the young persons, or into the mellow limelight at home, he reverted to his cocky attitude, and that attitude, waxing great by cultivation, assumed the menacing proportions of an obsession.

Returning to Ware as a sophomore, Bobby adopted a lurid style of dress and a picturesque vocabulary. He burned less of the midnight oil, and many evenings found him parading Heath street, the Broadway of the town, in company with certain highly flavored youths whose chief object in life was to dispose of as much unearned increment as possible. Following the lead of these youths, he was initiated into various forms of amusement which were considered mannish; as a general result his stand dropped and his reputation acquired a grayish tinge. Also,



his popularity waned, for it became noised abroad in the collegiate world that young Dale was setting a rather fast clip and was suffering from the disease known as enlarged cranium. In most cases there would have been nothing alarming in this situation, for many a boy, feeling his oats after his first success, goes through just such a period of mental and moral aberration and emerges practically unscathed; but Bobby was headstrong by nature, and had never felt the curb. When he was warned he laid his ears flat on his head and dug deeper into the bag of "life." He got involved in a number of foolish pranks, which led to others of an equally humorous but less innocent nature, and as a consequence came into periodical conflicts with the university authorities.

"Mr. Dale," the wise old dean would say, swaying gently in his swivel-chair and focusing his pale blue eyes on the small ivory paper-cutter, which he twirled ceaselessly between his fingers, "Mr. Dale, about midnight on Thursday last a brass dinner-gong was thrown through the window of Instructor Carr's bedroom in Northwest Dormitory. When Mr. Carr, aroused by the noise of falling glass, thrust his head out of the window, he received a douche of ice-cold water. It—ah—hurt his feelings very much. Do you know anything about the matter?"

Later, it was: "Mr. Dale, on the night of Sunday last, you, accompanied by two others, mounted the statue of ex-President Breckinridge in the middle of the campus and announced in—ah—very loud tones that you were Carmen Sylva, Queen of Roumania, and were going to sing. You sang. Then, still in company with these others—whose names I have here—you marched across the campus in an unseemly manner, shouting and cheering, and ended the evening's—ah—entertainment by invading Divinity Hall and awakening all the theological students by singing the doxology. The authorities of the Divinity School are very justly incensed, and have reported the affair to me. Have you any explanation which you wish to make?"

Then Bobby would do a lot of explaining, and generally got off with a rebuke and a light punishment, partly because he was not, at this time, a hardened offender, and partly because the dean couldn't help liking him. Freed of the dean's presence he shook off the rebukes lightly, underwent or escaped the punishments, and followed the course of his own sweet will. In the Spring he went into training with the rest of the track team; but somehow his legs wouldn't work with the old vigor, and he found that his mind was not in his running. As the days wore on he grew nervous, irritable, over-trained; and one evening, returning from a dinner of underdone beef and badly cooked potatoes at the stuffy training-table, he fell in with two of the most harum-scarum of his care-free cronies and broke training with a bang of which the echoes endured for three days. He was dismissed incontinently from the team and awoke to an unpleasant consciousness of the fact that the university at large had no use for a quitter; he got the cold shoulder everywhere, and that peculiar byblow of public opinion which animates the student body of a college, and which, at first, had operated in his favor with an illogical strength, due to an exaggerated estimate of the importance of athletics, set in against him as relentlessly.

Now the pricking of his bubble, instead of chastening Bobby, made him sullen and obstinate; he was too young to reason things out sanely, and the blood of generations of hard-hitting Anglo-Saxon ancestors, racing up his spinal column to his brain, caused him to see red. It was the same quality that had enabled him, running on his nerve, to break Ballinger's heart in the last hundred yards of that famous quarter-mile; only, in this case, its object was a perverted one. His little world had been suddenly turned topsyturvy. At first, everyone had been nice and kind to him; then everyone had, apparently overnight, assumed the right to kick him, and he couldn't understand the reason why, for the hardest thing for youth to comprehend is the connection between cause and

effect, and Bobby had never been taught this connection in childhood. Of course he himself was to blame, and not the university; nevertheless, it is possible that if, at this time, some older man of flesh and blood, whose nose was not bound to a book, had gone to him and explained, carefully and without excitement, the danger of his ways, much trouble would have been averted. That, however, is arguing a condition contrary to fact—to use a scholastic phrase. What actually happened, it is woeful to record, but that recording must be done.

Bobby, when he learned, as he thought, the extent of his disgrace, put his head down between his shoulders, regarded the university at large with a bloodshot eye, and embarked on a spree to which his previous efforts at dissipation had been as moonlight unto sunlight, as water unto wine. This was unquestionably a very reprehensible thing for him to do, but it must be remembered that he was very youthful, that he had always had his own way, and that these collegiate misfortunes seemed to him of great importance. His spree lasted, with intermissions, until June, very nearly got him expelled, and caused him to all but fail in his final examinations for the year.

He did not go back to Minnesota that summer; instead, he went to Europe on money furnished by the father, who so far as his son was concerned, preferred to disburse rather than ask questions. The European trip was bad for Bobby, because it gave him blasé notions, and kept him from discovering, by the hard knocks which a summer in the open air, on a farm, or in the Canadian woods, for instance, would have given him, exactly how infinitesimal a part of the world he was, and exactly how much of a fool he had been making of himself. He returned to Ware in the autumn with a stock of half-digested cosmopolitan ideas, and entered upon his junior years with a hatred for the curriculum, and a notion that Fate had treated him harshly—two very poor items for a healthy stock-in-trade.

That junior year was something of a nightmare. It must not be supposed that Bobby caroused all the time. Not at all; he attended recitations with a fair degree of regularity, and did a good deal of reading. When he did carouse, he limited his sphere of action to out-of-the-way haunts in the town, whence only hearsay evidence filtered up to the dean. Called to account by the latter, Bobby would fence dexterously, with a reckless, sharp look in his eyes, and the dean, who was too old and too busy to sense the real root of the disorder, would dismiss him with a caustic reprimand, from which all indulgence had departed, and at which Bobby laughed in private. So he learned by experience to keep out of open trouble; but he fell into a worse condition, for he cut himself off from the active life of the university, and acquired the habit of solitary moping in his room, with a book in one hand, and a whisky-bottle close to the other.

Gradually, liquor got an insidious hold on him, and often he went to his recitations sodden, dull, saved from exposure only by the leery cleverness which keeps the solitary drinker, whether boy or man, from betraying himself too openly. He became indifferent, neglected his personal appearance, avoided his classmates, and let his correspondence run down. Once, receiving, after a long lapse of time, a letter from Felicia at St. Sidonia's, he burned it unopened, not because he was in love with Felicia, but because he was bored. Felicia, to him, was merely a part of the old, clean life, from which he fancied, in his childish melancholy, that he had departed forever. It suited him to be rather tragic, at that time.

At Christmas he went to New York, and spent the major portion of the holidays in the Tenderloin. In the Spring he did not go out for the track team, but retired still more within himself, varying his moping, as before, with furtive excursions into the lower regions of the officially vir-

tuous town of Ware. When the end of June came around, he again squeezed through his examinations by the skin of his teeth, and found himself, at the end of the college year, weak in body and weary in mind, afflicted with a constant craving for drink, at odds with himself and everybody else. This condition was pretty bad; but it is to be noted that underneath it all there was still the old Bobby, the cheery, happy-go-lucky boy with the making of a first-class man in him. With all his pitiful, rotten, childish dissipation, he never played a dirty trick, or told a mean lie, or hurt anyone, directly, except his foolish self.

When he went back to Minnesota that summer, there was no red fire burned in the streets, for some news of his doings had percolated westward to the gossips of his native town. His mother, made deaf by unreasoning love to such reports, found him morose and irritable, and wondered, flutteringly, what was the matter with her boy. His father, by then, aroused to ire by exorbitant bills received from Ware tradesmen and lugubrious letters from the university authorities, gave him a savage raking over the coals—which Bobby treated languidly as another inevitable kick—and then promptly forgot about him in the interest evoked by a new railroad deal. The young girls of the place no longer tripped over their skirts in their anxiety to get to him, but regarded his passing from positions behind their blinds with fascinated but shocked eyes, and most of his old friends were scattered. As for Felicia, she was spending the vacation with a school-friend at Narragansett.

Bobby's senior year bade fair to be a repetition of its predecessor—except that he grew a trifle more restless. Tired of lonely moping and spreeing, he took up with the rowdiest set in the university, and there followed a long series of escapades which culminated, some time after Christmas, in a particularly uproarious jamboree. He was summarily called before the dean,

and that official, after enumerating Bobby's offenses, proceeded to deliver an ultimatum.

"You have wasted your time," said the dean, "and you have gained a reputation for worthlessness and dissipation which, if you are not careful, will dog you all your days. You have made your name a byword for all that is debased in the university—for the element which we are trying to stamp out."

"Am I to understand, then," asked Bobby, rather white about the lips but reckless and impenitent, "that you'll set the wolves of the faculty on my trail? If so, I may as well pack my trunk."

"No," the dean replied grimly, "that is just what you are not to understand. I shall not set the wolves of the faculty, as you are pleased to express it, on your trail. On the contrary, I shall give you a last chance. You were a decent boy when you came here, and, moreover, I have every respect for your very excellent father, and wish to do everything in my power to keep his son from being expelled. Therefore, as I say, I am going to give you another chance. I shall not exact any promises from you, and I shall not ask you what you are going to do. The bare chance is yours; take it or leave it. If you indulge in any more escapades between now and June you will not only lose your diploma, but you will be expelled in disgrace. That is all; you may go."

If you want to raise every bristle of a boy's obstinacy tell him, by all means, that you are going to give him another chance to be good because he used to be decent, and because you think his father an excellent man. The dean was wise in his time and generation, but he was old and very busy, and he did not understand exactly how his remarks would hit Bobby. The latter, departing from the dean's office, thrust his hands deep in his trousers pockets, hunched his shoulders and said to himself, "So I'm a byword, am I? Then I'll be a jolly good byword."

Thereupon he hid himself down

town and drank three Scotch highballs, which did not make him at all drunk, but fostered his sullen, angry, out-at-elbows state of mind. Leaving the saloon in which he had acquired this aid to wrath, he sallied down Heath street seeking adventure.

Now witness the hand of that Fate which, Bobby was wont to consider, had treated him harshly. As he stood before the window of a department store, staring idly at the imitation oak "bedroom suite" therein displayed, he heard his name called in feminine tones from the direction of the street. Turning, he beheld a very pretty girl in a very large hat leaning from the window of a coupé drawn up at the curbstone and beckoning to him. Not only was the girl pretty, she was obviously a lady; and it had been so long since Bobby had been hailed by any of her kind on the streets of Ware that he stood and gazed for a moment, hesitating. But the girl continued to smile and beckon, and he went forward finally, still staring stupidly in blank wonderment.

"Don't you know me, Bobby?" asked the girl. "I believe you don't!" And her quick laugh rang out without a hint of malice at his density.

Bobby recognized her the instant she laughed. "Oh, yes, I do," he said. "You're Felicia Waldron. How the deuce do you come to be here in Ware, Felicia?"

"Why, haven't you heard?" Felicia's eyes danced with excitement. "They've got diphtheria down at St. Sidonia's, and we girls were all shipped home in a hurry. It was too far for me to go 'way back to Minnesota, so papa sent word to Aunt Mary, and she invited me to stay with her in Ware. There's no telling how long the diphtheria scare will last, so I may be here the whole Spring. Isn't it great?"

"Fine," said Bobby, without enthusiasm. "But who is Aunt Mary? I suppose everyone has an Aunt Mary, but I never happened to hear of yours."

"Papa's sister, stupid! She married Mr. Smythe, president of the First National Bank of Ware, and they live

in the big house at the head of Chestnut avenue—the one with the bronze doors, you know."

"Oh—ah, of course," said Bobby. He remembered Mrs. Smythe as a stout matron whom he had once met at a tea-fight in freshman year, and who had cut him on the street several times since then. "But I didn't know she was your aunt, Felicia."

"She is," said Felicia. "Never mind about her, though. Aren't you glad to see me, Bobby? You ought to be, considering that you haven't seen me for over two years."

"Of course," said Bobby again, vainly striving to infuse cordiality into his tone. "I'm awf'ly glad to see you, Felicia. The two years have agreed with you, haven't they? You're a regular stunner!"

"I wish I could say the same for you," Felicia said bluntly. She had been taking in his white, haggard face, suffused eyes and general air of neglect and slovenliness, and wondering thereat, for in former days he had been a good deal of a dandy. "You look seedy, Bobby. Do you boys always wear dirty clothes in the morning?"

Bobby flushed. "Not all of us," he said. "I'm not in society any more, and it doesn't matter—" He broke off sharply, becoming aware of a shifting of Felicia's eyes and of a Presence at his side. The Presence, he discovered, belonged to a tall young woman, slim unto boniness, with a cold glance and a bad complexion. She had evidently been making a raid on the department store and proved, upon introduction, to be Felicia's cousin, Miss Smythe.

"How do you do, Mr. Dale?" said she icily. "Felicia, I think we shall be late for luncheon unless we hurry."

Bobby's back straightened as suddenly as if someone had hit him in the small of it with a shovel. He held the carriage door open for Miss Smythe with stiff politeness and would have turned away, but Felicia leaned forward, a bright red spot on either cheek.

"Don't forget, Bobby," she said clearly, looking him straight in the eyes. "You're coming to see me to-



night at eight sharp. Don't forget! Au revoir!" And the carriage rolled away, leaving him standing there with his hat in his hand.

For a moment he stared moodily after the vehicle; then a slow-dawning grin broke over his drawn face. "By the Lord, I'll go!" he thought. "She's a good sort, and if she's got sand enough to ask me, I've got sand enough to go and face the Smythes. It won't be half-bad fun, either."

Following the decision, he took himself off to a Turkish bath to get rid of the effect of the three highballs and the many which had preceded them, to the end that he might appear in the evening in a condition befitting a friend of Felicia, who had had sand enough to ask him to face the Smythes.

"Felicia, I'm surprised that you should introduce Bob Dale to me," said Miss Smythe severely on the journey up town.

"Why shouldn't I?" inquired Felicia with equal coldness. "He's a friend of mine."

"He's the most disreputable boy in Ware University," Miss Smythe stated.

Felicia opened her blue eyes very wide, then narrowed them very shrewdly. "Yes?" she said quietly. "Tell me about him, May."

So May told and Felicia listened, sifting the wheat of fact from the chaff of exaggeration with a common sense born of her Western blood and her Eastern training. She made no comments; but as the tale progressed her young jaw settled into a hardness that boded determination.

"I'm very sorry you asked him to call," was Miss Smythe's final burst of opinion. "I don't think mama will approve at all."

"Well, since I've asked him, she can't very well turn him away from the house tonight," said Felicia. Privately she added to herself, "And I don't think she'll turn him away in the future."

Promptly at eight that evening Bobby presented himself at the Smythe domicile, shaved, properly clothed and

in his right mind. As it chanced, his arrival had been preceded, a few moments before, by that of two extremely prim and ladylike young gentlemen who flourished in studious circles at Ware, the university, and were consequently popular with the mothers of Ware, the town. These youths, when Bobby was ushered into the room, raised their eyebrows in unison and greeted him with a holier-than-thou tolerance. This greeting, instead of embarrassing the black sheep, put him on edge, for, grievous to relate, he disliked the nice young men cordially, and the dislike roused him from boredom. It is likewise grievous to relate that, during the course of the evening hour, he put the studious twain into conversational shadow so dexterously and so completely that they retired in discomfiture, to the joy of Felicia and the disgust of Miss Smythe, who herself retired shortly, pleading a headache, and left the field of battle to Bobby and Felicia.

"Oh, it was heavenly!" cried the latter, as the portières ceased to tremble after the exit of her irate cousin. "They were so shocked, and they did look so like two stupid, lost lambkins. What can I do for you, Bobby, to pay you for it?"

"Tell me of yourself," said Bobby.

Then for half an hour Felicia told him about herself, and Bobby laughed and chimed in and was as much his old self as if two years of going down hill had not intervened between that night and the Summer out in Minnesota after his freshman year, when she had brought him temporarily to himself. The only difference was that now she was nearly nineteen and he twenty-one, whereas then they had been little more than boy-and-girl playmates—or, at least, so it had been with Bobby.

At last Bobby stood up to go, and then Felicia proffered a request, standing close to him and smiling up at him.

"Bobby," she said, "I want you to do something for me. Will you?"

"Sure," said Bobby, smiling down in turn. "You can have anything, even to the half of my kingdom. I



haven't got a kingdom, but you can have half of it, just the same."

"No," said Felicia, "I don't mean a play-promise; I mean a really-truly promise. Will you promise to do what I ask?"

"Sure," said Bobby again, still smiling.

"Shut your eyes and cross your heart?"

"Shut my eyes and cross my heart."

"All right. I know you'll keep your word. I want you to go into training this Spring and win the quarter-mile in the dual games again."

Bobby's smile faded like a flash, and he was silent for a full minute. "You don't know what you're asking," he said roughly. "Why do you want me to do it?"

Now Felicia knew quite well what she was asking, but she was much too shrewd to let Bobby see that she knew; she had no notion of posing to him as a reformer.

"Why do I want you to do it?" said she. "Because I'd like to see you run once, of course. I've never seen you run a race, and this will be your last chance, since you're graduating this year. I'll be in Ware long enough to see the dual games, I think."

Bobby stood and looked down at her very gravely; to him she seemed a child meddling with matters of which she had no real comprehension. "Well, since I've promised, I'll have to do it," he said, and Felicia drew a deep breath. He smiled once more whimsically. "What do I get if I win the race? A kiss?"

"Perhaps," said Felicia laughing. Then she hurried him away, because she felt a sudden and insane desire to cry.

Unto Felicia's bedroom, some thirty minutes later, came Mrs. Smythe, in dressing-gown and curl-papers, with a wintry expression which rested on her face as though skewered with pins.

"Felicia!" said she.

"Yes, Aunt Mary?" said Felicia.

"Felicia, I understand that you have been entertaining Robert Dale."

"Yes, Aunt Mary; or, rather, he has been entertaining me."

Mrs. Smythe frowned majestically. "I am afraid you do not understand the situation. Robert Dale is an exceedingly objectionable young man, and I cannot allow my daughter to associate with him."

"May needn't associate with him, Aunt Mary."

A look of martyred patience usurped the place occupied on Mrs. Smythe's physiognomy by the wintry expression and the frown successively. "If it is proper for you to receive him, it is proper for May also."

"Not at all," rejoined Felicia briskly. "Bobby Dale and I are old friends, and it isn't necessary for May to get chummy with him."

Mrs. Smythe gasped, no less at the adjective than at the idea, but preserved her regal composure with an effort. "I cannot allow my house to be used for such clandestine purposes," she uttered firmly.

Felicia broke into a laugh, but restrained herself in deference to her aunt's very evident seriousness. "See here, Aunt Mary," she said, "I don't want to cause you any trouble, or do anything that will seem ungrateful. On the other hand, I know that papa is paying you for my board and lodging, just as though I were staying at a hotel, and I have a right to a certain amount of independence. Now, Bobby Dale is an old, old friend of mine; I shot cats with him on the back fences"—again Mrs. Smythe gasped—"when he was in knickerbockers, and I know him from A to Z. There's nothing the matter with him except that he's been kicked and hounded until he doesn't know whether he's standing on his head or his heels. Oh, I know he's been a bad boy—a mighty bad boy, if you like—but it isn't any use crying over spilled milk. What he needs is someone to trust him a little and show him that he isn't so awfully bad, after all. He's been pounded enough, and I'm going to make him understand that there's at least one person in the world who believes in him and who

isn't lying in wait to wield the axe on him at every corner. There won't be anything clandestine about the process; and, furthermore, you and May needn't trouble yourselves about him one way or the other, though I'd like to have you speak civilly to him when he comes here to see me. In return, I'll promise that he'll be a gentleman and behave like one whenever you, or anyone else, sees him. That's all we need say on the subject, I think."

On Mrs. Smythe's cheek the ashes of age were at last supplanted by the crimson hue of rage. "And do you imagine," she demanded, "that you will be successful in this wild scheme for reforming this worthless young man?"

"I certainly do—if you like to put it that way," said Felicia.

"Child," said her aunt, "you know nothing of the ways of the world. I shall write to your father."

She kept her word that very night, and in due time received an answer by telegraph, as follows :

Let the kid paddle her own canoe. She knows how to take care of herself.  
(Signed) ENOCH WALDRON.

It cost Bobby a lot of hard work to train. In the first place, he had to fight to keep away from his daily dose of stimulant, from which the reaction caused him ceaseless torment, at first. In the second place, he had to endure the flouts and jibes of his former associates and the open distrust of everyone else. Then, too, the vigorous physical exertion, coming at the end of a long period of sloth and dissipation, made tremendous demands on his body and on his will-power, and the discovery of his slowness and weakness had a tendency to discourage him. In the beginning, he fought these troubles out of sheer doggedness, the same obstinacy that had helped him to win his first big race, and, later, had driven him along the down-hill road with equal pertinacity. Often and often he took his throbbing head in his hands at the end of an afternoon's cross-country running and pinned his

brain down, with aching intensity, to the bald proposition of keeping his word. Often also as he passed by the door of one of his ancient haunts, he would feel his tongue licking his dry lips and would drag himself on, suffering from burning desire and bitter self-loathing; indeed, it was not until he tried to climb back that he knew how far he had fallen. After a while, however, when the craving had become less intense and the reaction only periodical, his doggedness developed into a fierce pride in his running, a determination, beyond the flat one of holding his promise, to win his race and show the university that he was, after all, its premier quarter-miler. As the days went by his mind focused itself with more and more singleness on this object; he dreamed of it and thought of little else. When he went to see Felicia, as he often did, he talked of it with the ceaselessness of a monomaniac, though to others he was silent about his aspirations; and Felicia, smiling in secret, encouraged him. Bound up in his purpose, he did not notice that the spirit of public opinion in the university was gradually changing toward him, that people were noticing his faithful training and beginning to count on him and think there was something in him. But Felicia heard echoes of the change, and rejoiced thereat.

Thus the Spring wore on, and the morning of the day of the dual games found Bobby thin, nervous, drawn to the tautness of a fiddle-string, but clean of body and mind, and full of the determination to win. The trainer, meeting him early, took note of his appearance with a professional eye, and was a little worried by his strained look.

"Take it easy, my boy," he said. "Take it easy. The day's young yet."

But Bobby only laughed and passed on. He was on the verge of his victory, and in no mood to "take it easy."

In the afternoon the grandstand and bleachers at the track presented the gala appearance usual on such occasions. A great many youths, in light clothing and flamboyant hats, escorted as many brightly clad maidens, with an

adjunct of heavier mamas, to advantageous seats and poured blithesome conversation into shell-like ears, pending the commencement of the games. Among the more fashionable concourse was Felicia, all in blue, accompanied by Mrs. Smythe and May and by two painfully polite hopefuls, who were on Mrs. Smythe's white list, but who were only endured by her niece for the sake of seeing the meet. The bleachers upheld a noisy, negligee-shirted horde of students, sprinkled here and there with groups of graduates, and farther along the Carlton delegation, smaller, but making up in noise what it lacked in numbers, had its stand and seats. Popcorn and peanut venders added their shrill quota to the din of loud talk and periodical rah-rahing, and down upon all shone the blistering sun with a heat which in no way dried up the springs of the all-pervading enthusiasm.

Bobby sat in the track house, in his running togs, keyed up to the highest pitch, and paid little attention to the reports of the dashes and the half-mile; his mind was too much centred on his own race to be interested in others, and the return of the perspiring, nauseated winners and losers affected him only through his nerves. When the call for the quarter was issued he gathered his bath-robe about him and went out to the track, stepping gingerly on his spikes like one walking on eggs. On the track, in front of the grandstand, he discarded his robe and pranced for a moment, feeling his stride. The cheering section, catching sight of him as he passed, burst into a roar, and the entire assemblage, barring the Carltonians, who were busy cheering their own men, echoed the volley from throats tuned up by the previous contests. Bobby paid little attention to the rumpus; he was there to win, not to be cheered.

At the starting line he took heed of his antagonists. They were two in number, a short man and a tall, the former a freshman with a prep. school reputation, the latter the winner of the year before, a consistent fifty seconds

performer. The fourth runner was a Ware man, incapable, on record, of more than fifty-one.

At the pistol, the Carlton freshman jumped into the lead, opening up a gap of five yards before he was caught, at the second turn, by the older runners. Then, in the middle of the backstretch, his veteran team-mate went to the fore, steadily and evenly, with Bobby, swinging along in a beautiful clockwork stride, taking the dirt from his heels. The cheering was continuous, and the rah-rah-rahs reached the runners with the effect of a paralyzed volley.

At the far turn Bobby began to make his bid. Cutting loose from the pole he drew up on even terms with the leader, then passed him with a burst of speed and took the pole again, this time in front. He heard the roar that followed from the watching multitude; then that roar dulled in his ears as he realized, with sickening intensity, that the years of foolishness had sapped his bodily vigor and that, stride as beautifully as he might, the snap had gone out of his legs. He ran desperately under the spur of the knowledge, but as he turned into the stretch for the tape, the Carlton veteran challenged him. Neck-and-neck he fought it out, even as he had fought it out with Ballinger three years before; but now in the face of certain defeat. He struggled gamely, running with head thrown back and every nerve and sinew and tendon strained to the breaking point, and the Ware crowd, rising to a man, cheered him with frenzied eagerness, but victory was not in him. Twenty yards from the finish he fell away beaten, and the Carlton freshman, coming strong at the end, went up into second place. Bobby, blind and staggering, crossed the line a close third and dropped in a dead faint as he did so.

It was a little thing to Bobby, that evening, that Ware had finally won the games. He avoided the inevitable celebration, with its bonfire and its speeches, and went and sat alone in his darkened room. He had lost the race which he had set his heart on winning,

and that heart was bitter within him. Then, as he sat hating himself and all things else, sore and disappointed, the inevitable reaction from the long weeks of training set in and he longed, with a furious and overwhelming longing, to go on a spree and get as completely, vilely drunk as possible. For a time he fought the longing, but the impetus for sobriety was gone, and at last he yielded, seized his oldest, most disreputable hat, and started. As he opened the door to go out, however, he noticed something white on the threshold. He picked it up and found a note from Felicia asking him to come and see her.

It was touch-and-go with Bobby just then. For a full five minutes he stood there considering, with one hand on the door and Felicia's note in the other. Then the balance turned, though Bobby did not realize at the time that his decision was a momentous one.

"What's the difference?" he said to himself. "She's been mighty good to me, and if she wants me, I'll go."

He found Felicia quite alone and greeted her with an attempt at bravado.

"Well, I lost," he said, smiling awry.

"Oh, no, you didn't," said Felicia with a look in her eyes which she had never let him see before, and which he was too much engrossed in his own thoughts to notice now. "You didn't lose at all. You ran the sandiest race a Ware man ever ran. What does it matter where you came in?"

Bobby dropped into a chair and stared moodily at the carpet. "I lost," he repeated. "I may as well go back to the woods. I'm useless."

Then Felicia did a thing which her aunt, no doubt, would have judged highly reprehensible. She knelt on the floor at Bobby's side, closed one of her hands firmly over one of his and tilted up his chin with the other.

"Look at me!" she commanded. "Do you know what you've done? You've kept your promise to me, and there can't be very much wrong with a man who'll keep his word with a girl, when he doesn't want to, and when everyone says he won't, and when he doesn't see any use in it. What does it matter about the old race? Aren't you a thousand times better off than you were two months ago? Answer!"

And Bobby, looking at her, gave a straight answer, because he could not help it.

"Then," she went on, "why are you so discouraged and down in the mouth? If you're so much better off now, think how much better off you'll be in a year, if you stay straight. Are you going back, Bobby—dear?"

Then a very human miracle happened; for Bobby saw through Felicia's eyes the light which no amount of drubbing had, or ever would have, been able to make him see. He realized the extent of his old foolishness and the inevitable success that would follow, in time, if he behaved himself. In short, he saw the relation between cause and effect. Gripping Felicia's hand, he looked at her with clean eyes.

"No, by God, I won't go back!" he said, and his sincerity robbed the words of melodramatic quality.

Continuing to look, he beheld another light, which had been awaiting him for many days, had he but known it, and for which he himself had been waiting, though he had not known that either. His arm slipped around Felicia, and a new mastery, both of himself and of her, came into his eyes to answer the call in hers.

"Do I get my kiss, dear?" he asked gently.

But Felicia, now that her work was done, was smitten with sudden shyness and hid her face against his shoulder.



# THE RED FLARE

By Clara F. McIntyre

THE drawing-room was quaintly furnished and softly shaded. It was as if the coolness of a New England "best parlor" protested against the intense California sunlight outside. The furniture was of heavy mahogany; the paper on the walls was delicate in pattern and color, and against it hung rare old engravings and two or three oil portraits, in heavy gold frames darkened with age.

Near the wide brick fireplace, where a bunch of brilliant flowers, standing in a jar between the andirons, gave almost the effect of fire, was a small table, set out with a brass kettle and a tea-set of dainty, old-fashioned china.

The man who sat near the table, thrown back in a low arm-chair, was singularly out of harmony with all his quiet surroundings. He was not very tall, with shoulders remarkably broad for his height. His unconventional dress—a soft shirt with turn-down collar worn without a vest under a loose sack coat—showed to good effect the fine lines of his chin and throat. His heavy reddish-brown hair grew a trifle long in front and was brushed carelessly back from his high forehead. His face was interesting, and puzzling; it suggested brute strength and unscrupulous daring, while at the same time the curve of the lips was wonderfully delicate and fine, and the eyes, which at first struck one as a little hard and bold, could become winningly soft. The hand which rested on the arm of the old chair was white and not over-large, but it showed plainly strength and use.

He was not looking at his companion, he was staring at the red flowers in the fireplace, and she, rather nervously,

was fingering some roses she had stuck into the belt of her white gown. She herself, in the gentle orderliness of the room, seemed in her proper framing. The pure outline of her cheek and its delicate coloring, the soft brown hair piled on her small, well-shaped head, the simple taste of her dress—all fitted into the picture and seemed to speak of a sheltered, happy life, with a long line of sheltered, happy lives behind it.

The man spoke first, quietly, but apparently with some strong, suppressed feeling under the quiet.

"I want to know why," he said. "I'm not blaming you. Heaven knows, and I know, that you've the right to hesitate. I know as well as you do that there are dozens of men who would think I hadn't any business even to say 'How do you do?' to you. But"—he squared himself a little in the chair, and sent a challenging look from his eyes straight into her face—"that has nothing to do with it. The question is, Do I care and do you care? Nothing else in the world matters."

"Nothing?" she asked softly.

"Is it the divorce?"

She bent over toward the tea-table, and moved one of the cups; there was a little more color in her face.

"I thought we had been all through that. I told you the story; it's not a very pleasant one, I know, but it might be a hundred times worse. I could make the excuse that I was only a boy, but I wasn't, except in years. I had lived more, up to twenty, than most men you know live in double that time."

She was not looking at him, but she said in a low voice, as he paused: "Yes, I know."



"I knew the under side of things as they don't. I had seen the silliness of some of the conventions we're taught to worship. I had lived with men in the rough, where a man's fist and brain are his only capital, and the devil takes the one that's afraid."

His voice roughened in his excitement, he glanced at her, and went on in a more subdued tone:

"I was a newsboy at thirteen, a roustabout along the wharves at fifteen, a sailor at seventeen, and after that—for seven months I was in hell!"

His face darkened, and his hand clenched.

"I have never told you much about that work. I don't want to. I don't want you to know the condition it got me into. You would be ashamed to know a man who had let himself be made into a machine."

"No," she said gently, "I should be proud to know a machine that had made itself into a man."

His face cleared a little, but there was bitterness in his tone, as he went on.

"It was a company with a big name—one that I had always honored. And the manager said pretty things to me—things that made me proud to be an American citizen, with a future to make. But when I came out, I didn't care what I was citizen of. And I cursed the power that could take boys like me and make us into cattle."

He was on his feet now, indignation showing in every line of his body, the squared shoulders, the raised head, the fierce eyes. She sat still, a strained quiet on her face.

Suddenly he dropped into the chair again, shaking off his excitement with a grim little smile of dismissal.

"Well, there's no use going all through that. But it was after that, that I met the girl. I knew what she was; I didn't idealize her. I hadn't many illusions left to shatter, worse luck, about her kind. She was cheap; she was shallow, and I knew that her feeling for me was chiefly pleased vanity, for young as I was I was something of a figure among the men. She had been wronged almost as much as I had—in a different

way, but it was the same infernal machine that was crushing the life out of her, and she was weaker and a woman, and I was sorry. Then, she wasn't bad to look at."

His tone was hard and dry. The girl's cheeks flushed again. She pulled one of the roses from her belt, and began stripping the petals from it.

"I worked like a tiger for two years to keep that woman. It wasn't because I wanted to. After the first few weeks, I knew her for even worse than I had thought her, and she was nothing to me. But I had got her into the business and I held on till she wanted me to stop. Then I did the only decent thing—went away and let her sue me for a divorce. I was happy, I own. I tramped for six months, and I used to whistle and sing, as I went along the country roads, for sheer delight at being free."

He drew a long breath, and turned quickly toward her.

"You told me, the other day, when we went over all this, that you didn't blame me."

"No," she answered in a low voice, "I don't blame you, at all."

"Then why—"

"Why?" She rose suddenly to her feet, throwing out her hands in a quick little gesture. "Because—because—I am afraid!"

"Afraid of me?" His tone was very gentle now; he was on his feet, too. He took a step nearer; his hands moved toward her, then fell at his sides. A look of pained surprise was on his face.

"Yes." She turned from him a little and stared with worried eyes into the familiar room. "You asked if it was the divorce. It is, I think, and it isn't. It isn't, as my aunt would feel it, as many of the people I know, would think of it. Disgrace, 'bad form'—I think nothing of that. It isn't that it is wrong, morally wrong, either; I don't feel that way. It would have been more wrong to stay together, neither of you caring."

"What is it, then?"

"I can hardly explain. I think it is—because you left her that way. If you had cared, and done it because she

wanted it so, if it had meant anything to you, I believe I shouldn't mind it as much."

He looked at her with wondering eyes.

"Well, of all strange reasons! I had felt that you could not think of me because my relation with her, meaningless as it was, stained me in your eyes. But this——"

"It would have been purer, more honest so. Don't you see? Don't you feel it? But if you could take one woman so, and leave her so, how can I tell—how do I know——?"

Her voice broke. She stood, still looking away from him, leaning heavily on the little table.

He was silent for a moment. Then he spoke, in a low voice which he tried unsuccessfully to keep steady. "Can you think—that? I am a vagabond by nature, I know, but there are things that a man must have. I should leave earth and air and light, before I left you."

He shook himself out of the emotion, as he had out of his anger a while before, and sat down again, leaning forward to study her with thoughtful eyes, as if he were pondering some new way to put his case. She sat down, too; her face was white, but she met his look bravely.

After a while he began to speak, slowly.

"You mustn't think I don't realize how hard all this is for you. It's like a whirlwind coming into—well, into a church. This room, now, it's like you, and all that's back of you—granddaughter of a college president, and daughter of a statesman, and on your mother's side a whole line of clergymen and scholars. Do you suppose I don't know what it would mean to break through all that? Oh, we are as good as you are." His head went up with a movement of pride. "We fought in all this country's battles from French and Indian down, and there's good honest English blood in me, with a dash of Irish to give it flavor. I wouldn't give my pedigree of fighters for yours. And my father was a gen-

tleman, too, if ever man was, and could have been a poet, if he'd ever had the chance to write his poems. If I have any knack of telling things now—and the blessed public seems to think I have—I get it from him, and I like to think I am doing some of the work he ought to have done."

The girl's face softened; she kept her eyes fixed steadily on his face.

"You are afraid of me because I come to you out of experiences which other men never speak to you about, which some of them scarcely know about. I have been through the mud, and some of it stuck. I suppose it has to. But let me say this"—he put down his clenched fist, firmly, on the arm of the chair—"I have fought up, from a rough boy whom you would have shrunk from on the street, till I am able to come to you and offer you a name that means something among men, and shall mean more, if I live. I believe I am as clean and as straight as most of the men who could come to you so. Some of the mud had to stick, as I said, but I always did my best, and my quickest, to get it off. Can't you believe that? Can't you trust me?"

Her eyes, still fixed upon him, were still troubled, and she made him no answer. He shook his head and smiled a little sadly; then he leaned toward her again. His voice was low and musical, almost caressing.

"When a man loves a woman, he may love her in one of two ways. He may love with his body, or with that and all the rest of him. There are the two parts in me—my body, that has been through dirt and cold, that has been toughened by rough men's blows and racked by torturing labor, that has come out, after it all, clean if not fine, straight if not graceful, useful to me, and I think not repulsive to others. That loves you, and it has the right to. For I am a man and you are a woman, and the world is made that way. I would give anything"—his voice sprang into a sudden fierce longing—"anything that I have or hope to have, to take you into my arms

now. But there is another side of me"—he grew quiet again, almost sternly self-controlled—"a side that has dominated over that body when it was rudest, when it was coarsest, through its worst degradation. Call it spirit, soul, mind, anything you want to, it has always kept, somehow, the power to see what is pure and to want it. That has earned the right to love you. My body loves what it sees and feels, your eyes and your hair, the curve of your cheek, and the touch of your hand. But my other self, my soul, if you will, loves the soul in you that gives life to all the rest. And that sort of love does not die till both body and soul are dead."

He went and stood in front of her, looking down at her face. His smile was very sweet, but his eyes were sad.

"Can't you believe—yet?" he asked.

The girl's eyes were wet, and her lips quivered.

"I wish my father were here," she almost whispered, and her look went past him to a picture on the wall. "He would know. He always knew—what I wanted."

She dashed the tears out of her eyes, and looked up at him. "If I only cared enough—if I were sure—it would be so simple. You could be vagabond, socialist, anything you liked, and it wouldn't matter. I could go anywhere, do anything for a man, if I really cared. But to begin and fail—to have roused this passion in you, and not be able to answer it, to shrink from your caresses as I sometimes shrink from the look in your eyes—I couldn't bear it, and you couldn't, either. If I loved you as you say you love me—and I believe it now—you could leave me if you wanted to, and I should still be yours. Nothing could kill a thing like that. I believe, oh, yes, I believe. But—it frightens me more than ever."

"You are not a fair fighter," he said. "You change your weapons. First you were afraid of me; now you are afraid of yourself."

She smiled a little, faintly. For a moment she sat quiet, her hands lying

in her lap, looking straight ahead with a puzzled frown; then she turned to him again.

"Let me try to show you my side," she said. "I know I am inconsistent; I know I seem weak and wavering, but there is something that I feel, and can't say. You came near it yourself, when you said how different we were. You have been talking all the time about what you have done and felt, about your life and your wanting to take me into it, and you forget that I have a life, too."

She stopped his start of protest with a movement of her hand.

"Oh, I don't mean that you want to be selfish. Only, you don't realize. I have other habits, other ties. There is my aunt, for instance. So many of the things she cares for seem poor and futile to you, but she is good and sincere, and she does love me. I must do some things for her, because if I did not, she wouldn't understand. And then, you must remember, the blood of all those ancestors you talked about is in me. Those quiet, scholarly men, those women who loved the gracious, easy trifles of life, they are all a part of me, and I can't get away from them. All these things are part of me"—she took in the room with a quick, comprehensive gesture, and added with a little laugh, "even the tea-table. You know you hate that."

"Only when a lot of other people are getting the tea," he answered. "May I talk yet?"

She shook her head.

"I have friends, many friends, among those people whom you speak of with contempt, because perhaps they haven't had just the same experience, and just the same freedom, that you have known. But there are some good fine people among them, and they mean a great deal to me. And some of the conventions which you think are silly and empty mean much to me, to all of us who have grown up with them, because they have been part of our lives ever since we began to be conscious of things."

She went over to a table where sev-

eral books and magazines were lying, and took up a volume, which she held out toward him.

"You know this?"

He nodded.

"Do you remember, 'Life moves out of the red flare into the common light of common hours'? That's what we have to think of; we must think of it. I can thrill over your adventures; I can admire you when you defy hardships and dangers, and rise above them, and come to me in a burst of daring and passion, but it's the moment of exaltation, the 'red flare'; it can't last, that way. We must come down to the 'common hours,' and there it is that the little things, more than anything else, count. I should want to see my friends and have them about me, and you would find them a bore. I should want, sometimes, to go to church with my aunt, and you would think it useless superstition. There would be things like that, every day. It takes the greatest love to be oblivious to those continual jars, and I am not sure enough of mine."

"But I am sure," he cried. His face, which had been anxious at first, had grown brighter as she talked. "You have given me more hope than I have had yet. Don't you see, you are getting down to trivialities, now? Oh, they do make a gulf, those little things, but aren't we big enough and brave enough, you and I, to make a bridge across that gulf? Of course, we must both do some giving up. I do hate the regular society fuss, going here and there just because it is the thing, but the people who are really your friends, who mean something to you and to whom you mean something, I shall always be glad to know. And you—you're too hard on yourself. You are not such a creature of convention; you like the real things, too. You like to tramp with me out into the country, or along the sea-shore, even with the wind and the rain beating in your face. You would like to camp up in the mountains, in the open air, with only the stars over you. You would like to go with me to some of the strange countries I have

known, and learn to know the people, as I have known them. And for some part of the time, you'd like to go to our old California ranch, and make the roses grow and ride the horses and pet the dogs. Wouldn't you like all that?"

"Yes," she said softly, "I should like all that."

He moved a step nearer.

"The 'red flare' need not die down. It can't, with people who live life as you and I would live it. There is pleasure in the mere existence, in meeting new experiences and learning from those how to meet still newer ones. The same light that is on this hour can be on all the 'common hours' to come, if you will only help me."

She shook her head, and put out her hand, as if to put back the images he had called up.

"I can't. When I listen to you, it seems almost—right, but there is something in me that won't let me say yes. And I must not let things go on like this."

"No, and I must not, either."

A sudden flash of decision came into his face.

"We must settle it, one way or the other, now. I have said all I can, and I have been as patient as I can. I love you, and I have told you so, as well as I know how. If you won't give me the right to spend my life proving it, as I'd like to, I must get away from here, where I can think of something else. They want me to go to Japan, next week, and I have to give them my answer tomorrow."

"Tomorrow?" she repeated in a startled tone.

"Yes, tomorrow at noon. The answer depends on you. I am not anxious to go; I'm no correspondent, and they can fight their war out without me, so far as I am concerned. But there'll be things doing there, and if I have no chance here, the farther away I go for a while and the busier I am, the better."

There was silence for a moment. Then he said, almost sharply:

"Well?"

"What do you want me to do?" she asked in a very low voice.

"I want you to say either yes or no. If you say no, I will not bother you any more. If you say yes——"

The hand that he leaned on the table trembled. Suddenly he burst out eagerly:

"You can't say no. You cannot look me in the face and say, honestly, that you do not love me. It's the traditions you have always lived by, it's your distrust of your own feelings, that are holding you back. Just realize that those feelings are right and honest. Give yourself to me, and I swear I'll do everything in my power to keep you from ever regretting it."

"I can't decide it now," she said desperately. "I will let you know, in the morning. I will write."

He came close to her, and spoke very gently.

"You love me. I know you better than you know yourself. You may send me away, but if you do, you will be

starving yourself. Each of us needs what the other can give, and you will find it out some day, whether you tell me to go or to stay. But you will not send me away. I trust you. You will not spoil both our lives."

The girl put out her hand to him, imploringly.

"Go, please go," she said. "I will send you a note in the morning."

He took the hand in his, and looked at her, the light of determination on his face. But there was no boastfulness in his voice, only the calmness of certainty.

"I am sure I know what will be in that note," he said.

As the door closed behind him, the girl sank down on the old-fashioned sofa and with clasped hands stared before her into the coming twilight.

"I wish I did," she whispered brokenly to herself. "Oh, I wish I did!"

## THE STRAYED

HAVE ye ne'er a word for charity,  
Good neighbors who staidly fare?  
I have lost my way unto Arcady,  
Who once was native there.

I thought that the moon might point me true  
Or that young-eyed Spring would come  
With a laugh and glad, "This way, my lad!"  
To lead me safely home.

Surely I strayed but a little way  
On the path of sordid things.  
Oh, the road was plain till I turned again  
Where the sign of Wisdom swings.

Never a bird may sing to me now,  
"Follow me, follow and find."  
And never a rose the pathway shows  
Blowing adown the wind.

Oh, land of my heart, my Arcady,  
Oh, land I am native to,  
Do you guess how far your children are  
Who wandered away from you?

Homesick, bewildered and wistful all  
In alien lands we roam.  
We have lost our way unto Arcady,  
And none may lead us home.

THEODOSIA GARRISON.



# ABSINTHE OR

By Roland Franklyn Andrews

EVERY afternoon I found Durant at the club making himself pale-green drinks with water and sugar and absinthe. Durant could write things which were worth the reading. Moreover, the Avenue is different from the boulevard. On the Avenue you can not make yourself so many of the pale-green drinks and continue to write.

"Pull up, man," I said. "These things will undo you."

Durant let the water drop through. Then he looked up at me from under disheveled black hair.

"And why not," he answered, "since there are no good women?"

I laughed. "It will pass," I said relievedly. "If it is only an affair, it will pass."

He raised his glass. "It is not an affair," he snarled. "I tell you there are no good women?"

I sat down. "Then drink Scotch," I advised; "that French trickle will scarcely raise the estate of the sex."

His eyes were blazing. Of all drink, absinthe is the most infernal. When he leaned across the table I noticed that his finger-tips were quivering. "And do you know," he demanded fiercely, "what a world full of bad women means? Do you know?"

"No," said I. "Why should I? There isn't any such world."

"Fool!" he sneered; then very softly: "It means death, man; black, rotting death."

"Fiddlesticks!" said I. "Fiddlesticks and silly liquor."

Without a word he left me. Then I joined the men who had come up from the Street, and rejoiced that though

our commercial life might border on the sordid, it was at least free from unhealthful vagaries. We drank Scotch.

For a month I saw no more of Durant, who ceased his visits to the club. I thought him at work on another of his brilliantly psychological novels. But one day chance carried me into the shabby little restaurant of Suzanne—it is only at Suzanne's that one can buy that prosaic sausage which they make only in Touraine and which they equal nowhere else in all the world—and there I found him. He was lank and white and his black hair was little more than a mop. Also he was making himself baleful green drinks with water and sugar and absinthe.

"You infernal ass!" I broke out, for I liked the boy; "are you trying to make a sot of yourself?"

Suzanne fluttered, holding up a warning finger, but he only laughed in ugly fashion over his drink.

"Why not?" he answered. "All women are bad. You remember I told you that."

"I remember you talked a lot of rot," I answered testily; "and whether it's artistic, or part of your pose, or plain lunacy, I neither know nor care. It is no reason why you should go about like a sloven and drink yourself into bestiality."

He held his glass to the light and peered into its opalescent depths. "Listen," he commanded. "There are no good women. All women are bad, bad to the very heart of them——"

"I'm sick of hearing that," I interrupted. "It's not so, and what if it

is? There remain the men. At least they are decent."

He went on, unheeding. "All women are bad, and women are the mothers of the world, are they not?—its creation, its life, its inspiration. Since they are bad all the world is bad. There is no beauty in it, no health, no cleanliness. Why should I not be a sloven and look what all the world is? And why should I not drink—drink and dream of pure things—drink and dream of good? It is all there is left."

I was growing angry. "See here," I began, "I was reared in the old-fashioned way. I've never written books, and probably I haven't the mind to grasp all the purple subtleties of advanced thought, but this much I know. Any sane man who talks of women as you do is talking cur talk."

I hoped he would strike me. Instead he rested his haggard face in his hands and looked at me pityingly. "Fool!" he mused mirthlessly. "A fool like the rest. And no simple thing I could tell you would be so true." He sipped his shimmering green drink. "I was like you," he continued. "A man—poor devil, he saw it first and he's gone now—spoke to me as I have spoken to you, and I flew at him—absurdly as you have flown at me. But afterward I thought, which is more than you will do, and after that I was tormented of curiosity and I went and learned for myself. Ha! ha! ha! ha!"—of all mirthless laughs that laugh of Durant's in Suzanne's restaurant was the most mirthless—"Ha! ha! ha! I learned for myself."

"Do you mean—?" I demanded.

"I mean that all women are bad, but I do not mean that any one of them is the worse for me. I only drink absinthe for the glory of my soul, and am a sloven. But I went and saw. Listen, you with your fine old chivalry, which you got from a printed book and which you wear only because you think it a handsome coat. I have tried them all, and I know.

"First, there was a working-girl, one of your simple, earnest sort that

despise the weaker sister and extract a half-fierce, half-mournful pride from the dignity of their labor. Bah! it was nothing. In a week I might have had her for my own. One had only to whistle for the animal. I went higher. The next was filled with learning; a woman of the professions; a lawyer, keen-witted, hard-featured, shrewd, not good to look at. A fortnight, perhaps. A little petting, a little feeding. The animal was only starved. I sought the higher being. I found it—so you might have thought it—an artist, a vague, spiritual being who lived apart. Her canvases throbbled with luminous beauty of the soul. She spoke in metaphor and in imagery, and she saw through you with her deep blue eyes. Another fortnight. The animal had only slumbered. A stolid wife, a tender mother, an icily brilliant woman of fashion. It was all the same. A flash of color, a crashing chord, a glow of warmth, and the animal sprang out. I have tried a hundred times, and always, always, it is so. They are all bad, I tell you; all bad to the core. More absinthe, Suzanne, more absinthe."

"Durant," I said sternly, "you know you lie."

He grinned malevolently. "I do not," he answered, "and if I did, why not? Since all women are bad, and there is therefore no life left in life, save for dull clay like you, why should a man not lie? Since there is no good in women, there is no reason left for good in men. To live and wish to live he must be as bad as life—and women are life. They make it, they sustain it, they ruin it. Live, drink, lie, dream, if you can, and be damned."

"You beast!" I cried. "Your talk is insult. I know women—thousands of them——"

He gripped my arm. "You know ideals," he hissed, "only a fool's ideals." His grasp relaxed. "Ideals," he repeated slowly; "ideals, ideals. If a fool may have ideals, why not a man—and save himself? Ideals, ideals."

"Ideals, indeed!" I exclaimed. "I know——"

"You know nothing. But you have shown me a way. You have ideals. You live and are fat and content. I will have ideals. If there are no good women alive I will fashion myself a woman—a woman who shall be white and beautiful to her very depths, a goddess woman, whom I and all the world shall know, and who shall be immortal. Come, I am going home."

I walked with him to his rooms, saw him shave and order his bath and lay out his clothes like any self-respecting man. "It was the cursed absinthe," I said, and went away.

Thereafter I saw him at the club, a trifle grave, perhaps, but fresh and well-ordered, sometimes smoking by the window, sometimes sitting with his fellows, but never brewing the unholy green drink and draining it in solitude.

"And how is the ideal woman?" I ventured.

He held out his hand. "She is life and beauty," he said simply. "She is fair and glorious and white in every sinew. You helped. Come to my rooms and see her dear heart beat."

I went. His broad table was covered with leaves of manuscript, which he fondled tenderly. "She is mine," he said. "I made her—all. And I put the spark of being in her bosom. I shaped her body and I formed her soul. I put the light in her eyes and the softness in her touch. She is divinely beautiful, she is divinely good and she knows holy love. Listen."

Then he read to me this woman he had builded. She rose from the ink tracteries of the paper leaves radiant in her loveliness, gentle, pure, vibrant with sympathy, pulsating with joyous life, a wondrous, glorified figure of woman-kind. I sat there and her presence came stealing over me. I felt her sweet breath on my temples, I heard the deep tones of Durant among the manuscript, and it was the liquid melody of her voice. I am only a man who buys and sells for money and who lives in the strife and clamor of the Street, and yet I rose from my chair in that dim, quiet

library almost trembling. She was walking, this princess of women, through sweet meadows, her face was alight and all things faded away from her save the fair man who walked at her side. It was transcendent.

Very slowly I came back to earth with the Avenue at the door and the human folk passing on the pavement.

"It is wonderful," I whispered. "It is very wonderful. Is that life such as our life? Will she—will she marry him?"

Durant's face was buried in his hands. I saw his brow cloud. "I do not know," he answered wearily. "I do not know—yet. She loves him very dearly and she must be happy."

A week later, when I came into the club, I found Durant alone. He sat in a darkened corner, and he was twisting the fingers of one hand among those of the other. In many men this is a bad sign. I took the seat beside him.

"Absi—" he began.

"Not that," I protested, and waved the waiter away.

Durant looked at me fixedly. "She is in peril," he said, "and I am very tired."

"But you will go home and save her," I pleaded.

He nodded. I went with him and saw him plunge at his manuscript as a man into a battle. "That is better," I said, and went comfortably back to the club.

Next time I saw him he had the sugar and the water and the green liquor before him. He would not put it away when I pleaded, and he stared at me with eyes that were strangely brilliant.

"I drink," he said, "to dream the more of her. Why should I drag her down from her clouds of gold and fleece into this muck—she, who is so rapturous; she who wears nobility for a mantle. And she loves—ah, she loves that man so sweetly."

"And is he not worthy of her?" I asked.

"I pray so," he sighed. "I pray so. I think perhaps he may be myself."

"Then go home and bring her happiness," I counseled. "Do not keep her waiting."

He went. I did not see him for days, and when I called his man told me that he was very busy, so I took myself away without disturbing him. A business trip carried me to Chicago, where I spent a toilsome week, to return to my own good city worn at the edges and badly fagged. In my sad state the creature man was uppermost. I pined for the sausage of Touraine and I drove to Suzanne's. Within was Durant, disheveled and wild, the components of the deadly drink about him. He seized my hands between hot, feverish palms.

"She loves, she loves, she loves," he half-sobbed. "Ah, man, she loves him so. Every fiber of her is crying out for him. She is yearning for him now."

I was tired and a bit roughened. "The woman?" I questioned.

"The woman! The angel! The light of life!"

"Then you do her small credit to sit here with that villainous stuff. Come, get into my hansom and go home to her."

He climbed in, still trembling and choking. "She loves him so," he whispered, as we turned on to the asphalt. "She loves him so. Oh, dear God, I shall lose her."

"But he is you," I protested.

"You fool!" he cried shrilly. "Can't you see that is why?"

"You're drunk!" I snapped. "Here's your quarters. Now go to bed."

He stood shaking on the pavement, his lips quivering on his white teeth, his fingers writhing. "I must save her tonight," he gasped. "I must not sleep. I must save her tonight, or— or— She loves him! She loves him! Her heart is throbbing for him, her blood is leaping for him. Rose of fairest heaven, she loves him. Ah-h!"

"Be good to her," I said, as gently as a tired man could; then to the cabby, "Go on!"

It was nearly ten in the morning before Jenkins heard and got me out of bed. I went to Durant's rooms as fast as an electric could carry me. Reynolds, the club secretary, and a fussy little doctor with gray whiskers and spectacles were already there. Durant lay on the couch. His eyes were staring wide at the ceiling, his fists were clenched and his mouth was open. He was not good to see. The doctor was rummaging about the manuscript. "Drank like a fish, they tell me," he snorted. "Absinthe, too. Here's his last drink." He picked up the glass on the table and sniffed suspiciously. "H'm-m-m, chloral. I thought so. All the signs. High nervous temperament and drink—but he must have had some reason."

I picked up a sheet which lay apart. It was the last he had written. I read the closing lines and I shuddered. I, too, had known the goddess woman.



## THE HAUNTED BRANCH

MINE eyes the leafless world did search,  
And found for flagging hope no stay  
Save yonder branch—the finch's perch  
Through all a songful Summer day.

The bird was forth—it had no care—  
Was flown, as birds and Summer will.  
How lone the skies, how bare the groves—  
But ah, one branch was singing still!

EDITH M. THOMAS.